LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

Upon its true and proper Grounds

ASSERTED & VINDICATED.

PROVING

That no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel Men to any part of the Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline of the Gospel.

Written by a *Protestant*, a lover of Truth, and the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation.

London, Printed in the Year 1668.

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The Right Hon.ble Algernon Capell,
Earl of Essex, Viscount Maldon, &
Baron Capell of Hadham. 1701

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE *upon its true and proper grounds Asserted and Vindicated.*

AMongst all the endowments bestowed upon the sons of men, nothing is to have a higher price and value put upon it, than that we call *Conscience*; because of the immediate reference it hath to the pleasing or displeasing the great God, and those more noble Concerns of a better life; and also the irresistible Influence it hath upon our selves, to determine our well, or ill being here. Conscience is an ability in the understanding of man, by a reflect act to judge of himself in all he does, as to his acceptance, or rejection with God; this is the inward rule he hath to walk by: And 'tis but reasonable to believe mankind bound to steer their course, by what (upon the utmost improvement of their understandings) they know, and believe best. The proper seat of Conscience is in the understanding, and is no other thing, but this reflect act of our knowledge back upon our selves, dictating to us God's liking or disliking, what we do, as good or evil. This ability is more or less, according to the sutable light God affords to our understanding, either inwardly or outwardly, whether natural or divine; and is indeed to each man, the Rule of all other Rules God is pleased to govern him by: for whether it be by natural light or divine revelation, still the utmost bounds of his conformity lies in the knowledge and conception he hath of it, and of his duty in reference unto it. So that the information of the understanding, is still the guide of the Conscience; for when we become once convinced that this or that is God's will, my understanding reflects back to my self, and tells me, this is my duty in reference to it, and so comes in upon each man the obligation of that we call *Conscience*; which is indeed so unavoidable a reflection, sutable to the conviction and impression the understanding lies under, that no man hath power in himself, if he would, to escape it; *Conscientiam, non esse judicium theoreticum, quo verum a falso simpliciter discernitur, sed practicum, quo particulariter illa cognitio applicatur ab homine ad illud, quod ipsi vel bonum, vel malum est, ut sit interna Regula, dirigens voluntatem: Amos. de cas. Consci.* That there was

at the first in *Adam* a clear and perfect knowledge of God, and of himself, is not to be doubted, and that there was this reflect act in *Adams* knowledge, that he fully viewed and beheld himself and knew in what a happy estate God had made him, is also clear; and that this exercise of his knowledge also, in a way of Conscience, he had to tell him, he was accepted of God, and did well in whatsoever he did; but that equal reflection of mans understanding, both towards good and evil, allowing the one and condemning the other, was first introduced, when he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which was so called by anticipation, because by the sin committed in eating of it, *Adam* who knew nothing before, neither in himself, nor any other creature, but what was perfectly good, came to the miserable knowledge of good and evil. Evil before he could not know, for till he had sinned, there could be no such thing presented to his view; but in that act of his sinning, he saw the greatest evil, and the root of all other evil; what was good also, by his fall he came to know in another manner, than before; for before he knew it onely simply considered in it self, but now as it stood in a direct contrariety and opposition unto evil: That perfect knowledge man had at the first, so far retains, since the fall, its excellent nature, as to be a distinguisher between good and evil, and a constant witness for God in his soul, and by secret reference, to what he was at first, tells him, what he still ought to be: And this is the thing we call *Conscience*, which as it is the best thing left in man, by far since the fall, so 'tis the noblest and worthiest thing, the world hath left in it, and which above all others, ought to be cherished and valued; as that whereby God is most acknowledged, each man in his own breast most quieted and setled, and mankind best enabled to live peaceably in society and converse together.

That it hath continued amongst men ever since the fall, is plain, if we consider, that even in the darkest times of divine knowledge, before any Law from God was written, this knowledge men had of themselves, in reference to God, was a Law unto them. Their natural light derived to them from their first creation, dictating to them what they ought to do, and what not, and enabling them to pass a judgement upon themselves, of their due behaviour towards God; and this the Apostle in the Epistle to the *Romans* calls *Conscience*, which will either excuse them, or accuse them in the great Judgment-day, when the secrets of mens hearts shall be made known. There be since mans fall two things eminently left in him; A sence and knowledge of God, though remote,

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and that two wayes: first by Instinct in his very composition and constitution, God making him at first in his owne Image; and secondly, by the use of his reason, in beholding the works of creation and providence, which he does daily behold, and converse with, and which do eminently preach God unto him: the other thing is a sense of pleasing or displeasing God, by doing, what his understanding tells him is good, or ill, and this is to each man a Law; so *Paul* in that place of the *Romans* tells us, *that those that have not the Law written, are a Law unto themselves, and do by nature the things contained in the Law.*

When afterwards men came to be under a Law writen, and the knowledge of Gods mind concerning man was clearly revealed, every man came to have a larger view of his duty, and a clearer reflection upon himself in reference to it, and so came to have a more enlightened Conscience, sutable to the enlargedness of his understanding in his walking before God.

This then being premised, that mans perfect knowledge which he had at first does still retain, a tast of, and is a discerning principle between good and evil, and does enable a man to judge of himself, in reference to his pleasing or displeasing of God, by the one and the other; and that every man hath more or less in him of that we call Conscience; (unless in some particular cases, whereby often endeavouring to resist and oppose Conscience, God in just judgement takes away the use of it) and that Conscience is wholly regulated by the understanding, and the light thereof.

We will consider, first, that men do, and alwayes have differed in their understandings and apprehensions, and so in their Consciences about divine things, and their duty to God. Secondly what the grounds and reasons are, upon which men come so to differ; and thirdly, how far men are to be tolerated, and indulged one by another, in such variety and difference of knowledge and Conscience. For the first, we shall find it too obviously plain, so to have been in all times; A man must have some ill will, either to himself or his Reader, that should spend much time in the proof of it. If we look into those early times, before any Law was written, though all men had one common instinct of God in their nature and being, and had the same outward *Mediums* of the knowledge of God, which were the works of Creation and Providence, for there is no place where their Voice sounded not; yet doubtless the various Apprehensions of God, and of mans duty to him, were very great; some improving those common Rudiments of Divinity, to more reverent thoughts of a Deity, and a more sober virtuous way of living, by their natural light; and others so far degenerating

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from them, as that when they knew God, and might have known more of him, they glorified him not as God, but turned the glory of the true and incorruptible God, into mock-Deities of Birds and Beasts, and so came to be given up to all manner of Evil. Such who lived in those dayes, and were by dreams, visions, voices, and otherwise, particularly enlightned, had other kind of apprehensions of God, and principles of Conscience suitable thereunto; which yet could reach no further, than themselves, nor be obliging to others, farther than they could justifie those divine discoveries in their own nature, or by the credit of their own testimony gain belief, and perswade men thereunto. When afterwards the Law came to be written in stone, which was from the beginning written in the heart, and was in truth no other than a transcript of the Law of Nature, and the Light thereof; yet what great variety do we finde in the exposition of it, and what various principles derived from it; he is a great stranger to all Rabbinical Learning who knows not the wide compass of the Jewish debates and Controversies. And since the times of the largest and fullest Revelation of the mind and will of God, in the dayes of the Gospel, do we not see, that Knowledge hath multiplied Division? What great variety of thoughts have arisen amongst men, not onely concerning those more obscure notions of the order and discipline of the Gospel-Church, but of most of the other Doctrines and Truths of Religion? And so general have the misapprehensions been, that have possessed men in these things, that sometimes we find in the Christian Church, Truth shut up, and thrust into a very narrow corner; and sometimes an *Athanasius*, and some very few opposing the torrent of mistakes, with which the generality of Christian understandings were possessed. And still the variety of mens Apprehensions have produced the same variety in several sorts of Consciences, & the effects of it. If we seriously ponder the reasons of these things, we shall find them to come under several heads, in the viewing of which we may arrive at some satisfaction, in the second thing proposed, which is to know how such uneven, disproportionate thoughts, Opinions and Consciences, come to be amongst men.

The first and great account that may be given of it, is this; An innate infirmity in the soul of man since his fall, not to be able alwayes to make a right judgment of things, but to receive various impressions in the understanding-faculty (by reason of the infirmity and imperfection of it) according to all the several accidents, and circumstances relating to its information, and the object 'tis conversant about: *Adam* in his naming the creatures, and what else he did before the fall, was not capable of a mistake. But man since lies very open to all delusion and deceit,

deceit, being not able always to repreſent to himſelf in his underſtanding-faculty, all thoſe things that ſhould be known to make up a perfect judgment, nor if he could do ſo, were he able by the intrinſick ſtrength of that faculty, perfectly and infallibly to judge, of what ſhould evidently appear before him; nor laſtly, to remain fixed in any determination, being not only ſubject to alter and change, by ſeeing farther, and having more preſented to his view then what he at the firſt knew, but alſo in his own nature now, become mutable and apt to change, in his beſt and trueſt reſolves. And from ſuch a womb of infirmity, tis not hard to conceive, what various and differing thoughts may be born.

Secondly, The great variety there is of ſutable means, to operate upon ſuch a weakneſs in the Soul, and to prevaile over the infirmity of mens underſtanding, to lead them in ſeveral paths. This we ſhall eaſily find, if we conſider the ſeveral poſtures and conditions mankind is ſetled in, as to education, company, ſtudies, and many ſuch accidental matters, by which the minds of men are variouſly ſeaſoned and engaged in their apprehenſions; and ſo come to have differing foundations laid of Conſcience, according to impreſſions received thereby. And where (as in moſt it is) very weak and ordinary motives prevail, and no larger compaſs is taken to ſettle the judgment, than thoſe accidental means, that firſt prevail with us, yet as poſitive an obligation of Conſcience ariſeth from ſuch things, as from any whatſoever; there can be no perſwaſion ſo impotent, but may meet with ſome capacities, over which it may eaſily have dominion, and the bounds of ſuch mens knowledge, though never ſo mean, muſt needs be a rule to the Conſcience; ſo that to imagine all mens minds and conſciences ſhould be the ſame, is to imagine all men to be educated alike, all company to walk alike, and all books to be written alike; and that all other things, that work upon the minds of men, ſhould all concenter to inculcate the ſame thing.

Thirdly, beſides all this, there is an inbred diſpoſition in the ſouls of men, according to the bodies they dwell in, to apprehend and beleive diverſly of things, without any other outward help to ſuch a variety; ſome men being naturally prone to believe ſome things, and others to imbibe thoſe of a contrary nature; and this is to be found without much difficulty, in the ſeveral conſtitutions and compoſures of men, where we ſhall find their thoughts and opinions, holding great correſpondence with, and bearing much proportion to, their natural inclinations and tempers, and at ſeveral times ſeveral thoughts prevailing, according as the concommitant Humours of Nature are predominant in them: ſo that let a man but philoſophically view over the divers humors in mens bodies, ſuch as make men cholerick, flegmatick, or the like, and

the wonderful mixture of thoſe humours, in the various Temperiment of them; and he will not be much to ſeek, for the various Thoughts, Opinions, and Conſciences, that are in the world; and to force men out of theſe, through any door than that of the underſtanding, and means ſuited thereunto, is to force them out of their very nature and exiſtence; that ſoul in man, that was at firſt Lord over the body, and could receive no ſophiſtication from it, takes now a great tincture from thence, and ſavours much in all its operations, of the veſſel 'tis kept in.

Laſtly, let us ſeriouſly ponder the wonderful variety there is in that inward divine illumination, afforded to men more or leſs, as God pleaſeth, by which their judgments, and conſciences are in ſeveral meaſures ſettled and determined; As nothing can give us a clearer account of that variety there is in the world, in divine things; ſo nothing can be more prevailing upon us, to have compaſſion upon men ſeverally informed and perſwaded, than when we conſider, God affordeth divine light ſeverally to them, as he pleaſeth, and gives it in what proportion, little or much, ſeems beſt to his Wiſdom; and by making men of ſeveral growths and ſtatures in divine knowledge, does ſeem to let us know, he would have men of ſeveral ſizes and attainments in that kind, to live quietly together in the world.

Theſe things being able in ſome meaſure to diſcover to us the grounds of thoſe diſagreeing principles we find amongſt men; we will go on to the third and chief thing we have in purſuit by this diſcourſe, which is a ſerious enquiry, How far men are to be tolerated one by another, whoſe judgments and conſciences about divine things are found to differ: Conſcience in it ſelf conſidered, being nothing elſe but the underſtanding under ſuch a kind of exerciſe, as is before deſcribed, is ſuch a thing, as can by no means come under any poſſibility of force or reſtraint, beyond its own bounds; and is as much out of the reach of all humane power, as the ſoul it ſelfe is; and therefore is choſen of God to be the witneſs, which he gives to himſelf, amongſt the ſons of men, of their due behaviour towards him, and is a thing neither in the power of others, nor in the man himſelf; no man can point out what another ſhall believe, nor can he chooſe out his own belief, but ſtill the underſtanding gives in its teſtimony by the conſcience, though in actings the will may ſometimes prevail againſt it. This is that which chiefly differs a man, as to his relativeneſs to God, from other creatures, and is that whereby God keeps up his ſolemn claim of Soveraignty over us, in our own breaſts, by ſuch means as we can no way oppoſe, nor avoyd. This dominion of God was never delegated to any ſubſtitute upon earth, nor was there ſince the world began a judgment

judgement intrusted in any hands over the consciences of men, nor was it indeed under a possibility to be; since no man, nor men, with the existence of humane power, could ever come to know the state of another mans conscience, nor the manifold circumstances (only open to a divine eye) relating to it, and therefore does *Baal* himselfe to the *Corinthians*, wholly disclaim the exercise of such a power.

The simple actings therefore of conscience abstractedly considered, are not capable of a forceable impression from without, nor need any man fear the loss of liberty of conscience in that sense of it, nor reckon himself under an obligation to any indulgence for it, since a donation of it from any, will with no more reality afford it to me, then a restraint from them will any way actually take it from me. That which will (as most proper and genuine to the present enquiry proposed) come under consideration, will be, how far the products and effects of conscience in mens actings, in pursuance of it, are to be indulged, and how far restrained, and this will all come under two heads; first, How far men are to be suffered to do, or not to do, those things, which they say, they are in conscience obliged to do; secondly, How far men are to be urged by commands to do such things, which they say they are in conscience obliged not to do. That a punctual clear answer to these questions, will be a travel of great peril under-taken, none that have any way versed themselves in such controversies will deny, and therefore the better to secure our progress herein, it will be necessary chiefly and principally to reflect upon the Magistrate, and the power he is intrusted with: this method will carry its own evidence sufficiently with it: If we consider the power that mankind hath over each other, is exercised by him, and that the success of this notion, and the influence both of freedom and restraint depends soly upon him, and that the power of Princes and Magistrates do actually bind and loose in matters of this nature; I say if we consider this, we shall soon make a discovery, that (finding out what the Magistrate may do, and what he may not do in religious affairs) will give us a determination of this matter. In the prosecution of this, these several things shall be attempted; first, to make it evident, that Magistracy is an institution grounded upon the light of nature; and how far he may & ought to proceed by that both negatively and positively in these things. Secondly, that a Magistrate by becoming Christian, receives no addition of power to what he had before, only stands bound to an improved exercise of his power, suitable to the light he then receives. Thirdly, to discover some eminent mistaken treatis about the Magistrates power in Religion, which have miserably involved us. And lastly, to shew how far the Magistrate under the

Gospel should, and ought to act about Religion; and wherein he is not to interpose his power, the right stating whereof, is the true and solid foundation, upon which all true Liberty of Conscience is built.

For the first of these, that Magistracy and Government is an institution grounded upon the light of nature, is easy enough to be made appear, the first rise of it being in families, where it was wholly natural and paternal, and therefore it is that the first Commandment, wherein all subjection to superiours is commanded, is comprehended under the obedience of Children, required to their Parents, that being the first Magistratical Power exercised; That first Power and Authority God gave *Adam*, upon the fall, over the Woman, being a distinguishing Power between the two sexes, and not properly any Magistratical Power relating to a community. After there came to be several divided families in the world, they found a necessity of a power, that might have a larger and farther extent, then that in each family; which could be no otherwise grounded, then by a joint and common consent, God having not by particular designation appointed any to rule over the world; and no one family could claim a right to rule over another, nor could the first born in any family exercise any power, or extend his dominion farther, than that particular family: the reason whereof seems plain, because that paternal power, which is originally in a family, is not successive; there is no succession of that power Parents have over their Children, and Masters have over their Servants, (which is the ground of family-government) farther than those relations still reach; Hence it is the power a Parent might exercise in his Family, as a Father and a Master, he cannot exercise upon any of his kindred, or other collatral Relations in any degree further, and therefore that kind of Dominion must needs rest circumscribed within the bounds of each particular Family; and that more extensive Government of many Families together, was by a joynt-coalition and agreement of them, dictated by the Light of Nature for general good; there being scarce any thing a more necessary direction of Nature for mans own preservation and good, since his fall, than to associate himself in a Community under one Common-Government. How the Light of Nature did at the first operate upon men, to continue them of a necessity to joyn together in a subjection to Superiours, and how greatly their interest lay in such a subjection, relative to such a publick Dominion, we may somewhat discover, if we consider, First, that the Earth was at the first the gift of the great Creator to the sons of *Adam*, and what every man first possessed was his own, and whatever he could by his labour produce from it; (the same Law that is to this day, to the first discoverers of

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any unpoſſeſſed part of the world) now the only way to preſerve men in ſuch a propriety, and to make good that firſt Law of Gods donation, was to have by common conſent a publick power to take care of it, and reſtrain the violence and exorbitant injuſtice, that would otherwiſe have filled the world.

Secondly, When private differences came to ariſe between man and man, between cauſe and cauſe, it would prove impoſſible to end any ſtrife, while each man would be a Judge in his own caſe, and therefore it was found impracticable for men, to live without a third Judgement, which did neceſſarily point them to a Magiſtrate.

Thirdly, Man was not only a ſociable creature in himſelf, made to live in ſociety, and prompted by particular inclination to it, but each man came to ſee men had common concerns one with another, and intereſts of a publick nature, beyond the bounds of their own particular families; and there could be no way found out to capacitate them, to enjoy thoſe common advantages they might afford each to other, but by imbodying themſelves together, and creating a publick Relation each to other in one joynt-ſociety, the very being of which muſt needs lye in having one to rule over it, and to exerciſe that publick care, requiſite to its preſervation, to which no mans private power or concern either could or ought to lead him.

Laſtly, The ſenſible good each Family found in that Paternal Regiment exerciſed within it ſelf, might well induce them to fall into that more general; and to unite themſelves under one Political Father, in whoſe care and protection they might live ſecured.

Theſe and many other neceſſary inforcements upon the common ſenſe and experience of men, induced the power of commanding, and the reaſon of obeying. That God, that afforded to each creature a capacity large enough for its own preſervation, did not leave man without ſufficient light to diſcover this great Engine of his ſafety and happineſs. Well may we then look upon the power of Magiſtracy, as the greateſt and moſt tranſcendant of all humane things, and pay the due tribute of all Reverence and Obedience to it, as being the Sovereign Power of God, exerciſed in a way of Vicegerency amongſt men, and that wherein the peace and quiet of mankind is moſt neceſſarily included.

The Law and Light of Nature, having thus from the beginning placed the Magiſtrate in his Throne, the ſame alſo did lead and guide him to the exerciſe of his Power, by bringing him under this obligation, to do whatſoever ſhould be found neceſſary to the good of mankind, both in their private and publick capacity, and reſtrain whatſoever

ever is destructive to it; this is it brings Princes and Magistrates to a tye of duty, so is the donation of this Power exceeding large and ample: The first thing in which the power of the Magistrate is naturally exerted, is in his own preservation, wherein his Power is *Paramount* to all pretensions whatsoever; As in Nature each mans supream Law lies in self-preservation, who is bid to love his Neighbour but as himself; So politically in Magistracy the preservation of it self in its Power and Prerogative, and the exercises thereof, is the first thing 'tis led to look after; he is to preserve himself in order to that preservation he is to afford to others; 'twere very absurd to suppose a Magistrate bound to tolerate any thing destructive to his being, no pretence of Conscience is here to be suffered, 'tis a practice against the Law of Nature, 'tis to pretend Conscience to annihilate mankind; God hath not, nor will not promulge Laws to interfere one with another, nor will he ever reveal any thing against the standing Law of Nature [it being the remains of mans excellent creation at first] but what shall heighten and improve it to a further perfection. Herein therefore Princes and States are sufficiently secured by a power inherent in their very being, that no abused pretensions of a liberty for Conscience can ever invade or disturb them.

Secondly, The extent of the Magistrates power reacheth to a total suppression of all moral evil, and encouragement of all moral good; and that for these Reasons: First, moral evil is an abomination to every mans conscience, and therefore ought to be much more so to the Magistrate, who hath the only power of suppressing and punishing it: Secondly, moral evil and vice is most injurious to mankind, and destructive to that well-being and quiet the Magistrate is bound to provide for: Thirdly, It brings down sensible and visible Judgments upon persons and societies, with a voice easie enough to be heard by any natural ear, and therefore the Magistrate by the very Light of Nature, is loudly enough called upon to suppress it. This we have clear enough set down in the 13th of the *Romans*, where the Magistrate is said *to be a terrour to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well*; the Magistrates power is there fully asserted, but it seems to be but the same power he had before, his Commission seems only to be renewed with the same power he had from the begining; that the Apostle there speaks nothing of the power of Magistrates, beyond what the light of Nature gives them, seems to be very clear in two things: First, in that he instanceth in the present *Roman* power that then was; and 2dly, because he sets down nothing that the Magistrate is to do, but what the Light and Law of Nature doth directly guide him unto; That the Apostle

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ſpeaks of *Magiſtracy* in general is plain, and that he ſpeaks of it in the preſent inſtance of the then *Roman* Power, is as plain; now if all that belongs to the Magiſtracy in the abſtract, had not bin compleat in the Roman power, as to the right of it, the inſtance had bin no way proportionate nor right; The Apoſtle writing to *Rome*, no doubt intended to declare the principles of the Goſpel to be ſuch, as taught all ſubjection to the Emperour; he ſays, *The Powers that be, are ordained of God*, ſpeaking in the preſent ſenſe of thoſe that then were, and he ſays, *For this cauſe pay you Tribute*; that is, the preſent Tax you pay the Roman Emperour, is upon this very account; ſo that he carries on the inſtance of Magiſtracy all along in the Roman Heathen power. Secondly he ſpeaks of nothing to be done by the Magiſtrate, but what the light of nature dictates, and what was the duty of the Emperour then to do; to execute wrath upon him that doth evill, and to encourage thoſe that do well; wherein he is a Miniſter of God to us for very much good. By this we ſee then, this farther power of reſtraint in the Magiſtrate, in his natural conſtitution, that being to ſuppreſs all moral evil, and encourage virtue, he is bound not to ſuffer upon any falſe pretenſions of Conſcience whatſoever, any practices that diſcourage the one, or fall within the guilt of the other.

Theſe formentioned and unqueſtionable generals do contain in them the negative and poſitive execution of the Magiſtrates natural power, in things purely moral and political. How far he is by the Light of Nature obliged about the religious concerns of his Subjects, and wherein the Light of Nature layes an Arreſt upon him, not to proceed, that ſo the due liberty of each mans Conſcience may be ſecured, will come under a more pertinent conſideration, in a following part of this diſcourſe. We ſee by theſe things, the Magiſtrate negatively impowred in an ample manner, in his firſt conſtitution, over all things relating to the moral and political good of mankind. The Light of Nature excludes all ſuch Principles from the leaſt toleration, which make men ceaſe to be true Subjects to the State, or good Commonwealths-men in relation to others: Liberty of Conſcience is beſt ſecured, by diſclaiming ſuch who neither by natural or divine Law, can make any juſt pretence to it; 'Tis only to be given in things divine and ſupernatural, ſuch as neither deſtroy nor diſturb the civil and political intereſts and rights of men.

The ſecond thing propoſed about the *Magiſtrate*, will have no hardſhip to make appear; That a *Magiſtrate* by becoming *Chriſtian* hath no addition of power to what he had before; *Magiſtracy* is the ſame, and as legitimate amongſt *Heathens*, as *Chriſtians*. A Magiſtrate,

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when *Chriſtian*, exerciſes the power he had before otherwiſe, but receives no addition of power to his office; Chriſt in the Goſpel hath made no alteration in *Magiſtratical Power*, nor hath he given any addition to it, when exerciſed by *Chriſtian hands*; but a *Magiſtrate* when *Chriſtian*, is bound to exert his Power in a way ſutable to the light he then hath: He that hath no other than the Light of Nature, hath as much power about Religion, as if he were *Chriſtian*, and is to take as much care of the ſouls of his Subjects, ſutable to that Light, as any Chriſtian *Magiſtrate* is to do, ſutable to his. The power a Parent hath over his Child, a *Maſter* over his Servant, a Prince over his Subjects, is no more when they become Chriſtian, than it was before, only that power muſt be otherwiſe exerciſed, according to that improvement of light Chriſtianity brings with it. All natural and moral Power was the ſame from the beginning, though God was not pleaſed to ſet that power diſtinctly down, in a Law written, till long after, the Light of Nature gave a plentiful information about theſe things. The duty of all ſuch Relations, in the performance mutually of them amongſt men, is greatly farthered by the Light of the Goſpel, but the duty is ſtill the ſame; Several things do evidently evince this general truth.

Firſt, All natural and moral relations, belong to men as men, only ſo conſidered, and not as Chriſtians, and are fully compleat and perfect amongſt mankind, both in the power of the one, and the duty of the other, without any reference to any perſwaſion in Religion, or other qualification whatever.

Secondly, It appears from hence, becauſe whatſoever the Goſpel reveals to be the duty of ſuch relations each to other, we find practiſed by the Light and Law of Nature, from the beginning; theſe things being of abſolute neceſſity to uphold the frame and policy of mankind, God had naturally endowed them with a ſufficient diſcovery of his mind about them.

Thirdly, It appears to be ſo; becauſe Chriſtians are obliged by the Laws of the Goſpel, to give the ſame obedience, and perform the ſame duties, in theſe relations to unbelievers, that they are to Beleivers; the Goſpel ſpeaks of theſe things without diſtinction; Subjects are commanded to obey Heathen Magiſtrates in all things lawful, [and we are to obey Chriſtian no farther;] Servants are commanded, with the utmoſt duty of Servants, to obey unbelieving *Maſters*, and ſo Wives to be ſubject to unbelieving Husbands; all which declares theſe relations perfectly inherent in mankind, as ſuch, and no way relative to any other qualification whatſoever.

Theſe two preliminary conſiderations of the Magiſtrate; Firſt, that he

he has his Original in the Light and Law of Nature; Secondly, that his power and being is thereby perfect and compleat, and that Christianity gives no addition of power to such an office, will much farther the right stating the chief and last thing proposed, How far a Christian Magistrate under the Gospel, is impowred Negatively and Positively in these things. Before I proceed to which, I shall come to the third thing intended, which is to shew, how some eminent mistakes about the *Magistrates Power in Religious things*, have involved us into very destructive and pernicious extremities; a prospect of which may be had in these three things, into which the various Writings and Discourses of that Subject, have chiefly issued themselves: First, Some do make the *Magistrate* the sole Judg of all *Spiritual matters*, ascribe to him the power of setling what *Government* he pleases in the Church, appointing Officers in it, determining all differences in Religious things, suppressing by his Power all Errors and Heresies, and superseding all matters that appertain to the Gospel. A second sort with an equal warmth affirm the *Magistrates Power in Religious things*, but say *'tis never to be exercised but in a perfect subserviency to the Church, and that whatsoever the Church determints, he is bound to execute by the Temporal Sword, as the great Law of Christ.* A third sort, as wide of the Truth as either of the other, say positively, *The Magistrate hath nothing at all to do in Religious concerns, that he is a meer Civil-Officer, to take care of mens Civil-Interests, and hath nothing to do with things of a Spiritual nature.*

That all these Principles have produced hurtful effects, and that the truth lies distant from them all, will be found in a distinct Consideration of them. The first does little less than revive in the *Magistrate* now, much of that power *Christ* himself, and the *Apostles* by his delegation, exercised at first, in setling the Gospel-Church; and unless it can be punctually made appear, where in the Gospel *Christ* hath substituted the *Magistrate* to exercise such a dominion over his House, it will soberly be found a dangerous Intrenchment upon his Kingly Office; 'tis one thing to take care of the execution of what *Christ* hath already setled, and another to make Laws and Customs about those things: This opinion, as it is by many late Writers maintained, dissolves all Ecclesiastical Regiment, and annexeth the Government of the Church to the Civil power, or indeed drowns the Church into the State, or at least mixes them, as much or more than they were mixed together under the Judaical policy. What ever government the *Magistrate* settles, cannot be Ecclesiastical but Civil, if it be foreign to what is already divinely appointed; if it be not then its not the setling, but the executing of what is already setled; unless you will say, that *Christ* entrusted

him

him to ſettle the Eccleſiaſtical Government of his Church, and that will ſeem not a little ſtrange, that the Magiſtrate, who is no Spiritual Officer ſet in the Church, nor cannot himſelf adminiſter in executing the leaſt thing within it, ſhould have ſuch a Supream Power over it. Either Chriſt and the Apoſtles did ſettle a Government in the Church, or they did not; if they did, the Magiſtrate as well as others is obliged by it; if they did not, but that 'tis left to the Magiſtrate, he has a greater power, at leaſt in the exerciſe of it, than ever they had. For if we ſuppoſe, they had power to ſettle a Government, but did not think fit to exert that power, but left it to the Magiſtrate, his power in the execution of it is greater than theirs. 'Tis much that the infallible Wiſdom of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, could not better find out an Order for the Goſpel-Church, than to leave it to the mercy of every Magiſtrates diſcretion; and 'tis equally to be wondred at, that an Officer of ſuch neceſſary importance to the Church, as to ſettle the Government of it, ſhould be wanting when the Goſpel was firſt planted; and every thing ordinary and extraordinary belonging to it, was preſent to accompany the Glorious Preſence of Chriſt upon Earth, and which might any way contribute to rear up the Fabrick of the New-Teſtament Church. 'Tis much that ſuch an Officer of ſo abſolute concernment, as this Opinion makes him, ſhould not be in the Chriſtian World for three hundred years together. If we will ſeek the meaning of this providential diſpoſal of things; may we not ſoberly think it to be, that the Goſpel was a thing wholly founded upon Spiritual Power, was compleat therein, and needed not any Temporal power to contribute to its perfection.

This impowering the Magiſtrate with a Superlative Authority, in ſetling what relates to the Government of the Church, ſuppoſeth this, That the Scripture hath revealed no truth, that is binding in this matter, but this, That what the *Magiſtrate* pleaſeth to ſettle in every place, that is right, [and this I am ſure the Scripture hath no where revealed] and ſo we are like to have as many diſtinct Governments, as there are States and Kingdoms diſtinct in the World; 'tis ſtrange, thoſe that are for exact Uniformity in any one Church, ſhould lay a foundation of ſuch confuſed multiplicity in the Church Univerſal.

Either we muſt ſuppoſe, Chriſt was not faithful to reveal all that concerned the Government of the Goſpel-Church, which God intruſted him with, or elſe that it was the Will of God there ſhould be no more revealed, but that all ſhould be tranſiently left to the *Magiſtrate*. To ſay the firſt, were but to urge Blaſphemy for Reaſon; if the ſecond, 'tis to impower an Officer in ſuch a neceſſary and weighty matter, whoſe very

very being in the *Church*, with an ability to do it, had a futurity of three hundred years to come. During all which time, if Christ and the Apostles setled no Government in the Church, and there being no Christian *Magistrate* that could settle any; How could the Church then come lawfully to have any? If it be said, Where there is no Christian *Magistrate*, every Church may use their own discretion; then 'tis plain, the Government of the Church under the Gospel, hath no other bottom, than what every *Magistrate*, and every particular Church pleaseth; and so not onely *Magistrates*, but Churches, and indeed all the World may be their own Carvers in this weighty matter; 'Tis very hard to be credited, that the Government of the Church, which does so greatly relate to the preservation of the Truth of Doctrine in it, should be left to such floating uncertainties.

Besides, this Position makes all that part of the Gospel, which lies in Precept and President about the Rule of the Church, and what was by the Apostles then practised and commanded, to be of no use to us, nor obligation upon us, farther then the Magistrate pleaseth; 'tis to give him a dominion over that part of the Scriptures, and opens a door to make him (as some have fully done) Lord over the whole New Testament.

Two things are usually said to prop up this Power in the Magistrate.

First, That there is nothing positively determined in the Gospel about these things; because the Gospel being to take place throughout the whole world, no one frame or model of Government could be composed, that would conveniently fit all persons and places where the Gospel might come to be received and setled; and therefore the Wisdom of Christ hath left things of that nature wholly undetermined.

This is a thing taken for granted, and wholly without any Divine Ground to warrant it, and is in the reason of the thing it self insufficient; for we find nothing in command or practise by the Apostles in setling the Christian Churches, but what will agree with any Nation or People in the World. He that will say, that the Order of the Gospel, as we there find it practised and required, will not agree to any place; may with as much reason, if not more, say, That the receiving of the Gospel it self, in the general belief of it, will not agree to that place.

These things make it evident, that the Order and Discipline we find setled in the Gospel-Churches, in the Apostles time, must needs fit every place and people, and can do no hurt any where. First, It highly tends to heighten and compleat the duty incumbent on all Moral and Natural Relations; that which Christ hath appointed to preserve order

among Christians as Christians, will never hinder, but farther it amongst men as men. Secondly, The power upon which Christs Rule, setled in his Church, is founded, is wholly Spiritual, it can never do any violence to mankind, nor clash with any humane power, because that is the Boundary of it. Thirdly, The thing designed and attained by the Order of the Gospel-Church, is no more than to preserve men in a regular capacity to enjoy all Christs Institutions; and therefore he that will say, This Order will not suit any Nation, must say in effect, None of Christs Institutions will agree to that Nation. Fourthly, There is nothing in Christs Government of his Church, that is properly relative to the Political Government of a State, or does any way determine the form of it, but it may be equally exercised under any Government whatsoever. The Religious policy of the Jews did highly relate to the State, and was commixed with it, and the same Government of that Church, could not have been had without a sutable conformity of the State to it, and so could not well reach beyond that Nation, and peculiar Countrey and People. But the Gospel-Church, and the Rule of it, is grounded upon quite other terms, and hath its first Principle in that saying of our Saviour, *Where ever two or three are met together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them*; And there is no place, nor people under the Sun, but where, with much advantage, the order of the Gospel, as well as the Gospel it self, may be introduced.

A second thing made to prop up this power in the Magistrate, is, Because of the wonderful difficulty we find in the New Testament about matters of this nature. This I acknowledge should put us upon much enquiry, and great indulgence to each other, but I cannot yeeld it a good reason to establish a visible Judge to settle a Civil Pope; for at last upon the same grounds it will be found out, that the Scripture in Doctrinals is obscure too, and so the Magistrate must be likewise an Umpire in those things, & finally in all. Were once all these Carnal Intrests, & Political Concerns that are now twisted into the Government of the Church, laid by, it would be found a thing very feasible to deduce from Scripture Precept and Example, (limited to no particular case in the reason of it) a systeme of Ecclesiastical Rule, sufficient for the obtaining all the holy and good ends designed by the Gospel, and compleating men in a Spiritual Society, as an Organical-Church; and if a Church can be so constituted (which is a thing in it self of no hardship, if men would be contented with the simplicity of the Gospel, and Christs wisdom in these things) as that Church will be most pure, as having nothing of humane make in it, so it will perfectly annihilate all those pretended necessities for the interposition of humane Authority about such things.

If

If the *Magiſtrate* have likewiſe a farther power to ſuppreſs all Errors and Hereſies, and to eſtabliſh by force the Orthodox Truth (the Rule of which muſt needs be what he thinks to be ſo) this will inevitably follow, that there can be never any ſuch thing, as *Liberty of Conſcience*, in any caſe, or upon any terms in the world, under a *Chriſtian Magiſtrate*, he ſins if he ſuffer or tolerate any thing but what he thinks punctually right.

If he be the proper Judge entruſted, firſt to judge, and then to execute his Judgment with the Temporal Power; all Liberty, to whoſoever is not of his mind, is perfectly gone: This is no other than to make the *Magiſtrate's* Power a meer *Inquiſition*; And by this means a Chriſtian Magiſtrate will prove a *marvellous hurt* to much of the Church where he governs; for, unleſs you will ſuppoſe all the Truth, and all ſound Chriſtians to be included in what he eſtabliſhes for Orthodox; if there be any Truth, or true Profeſſors of Chriſtianity amongſt all the other Opinions he perſecutes, they are ſure to be ſufferers, and it will ever fall out, that all thoſe that are not of the *Magiſtrates* Opinion, had better live under one of *Gallio's* temper, than under a *Magiſtrate* ſo practiſing.

Theſe large poſitions about the *Magiſtrates* Power, have no viſible ground for themſelves in the Goſpel; and when 'tis ſaid, the reaſon of it is, becauſe there was no Chriſtian *Magiſtrate* till long after, and ſo little mention is made of his Authority in theſe things, there is nothing ſaid that can be any way ſatisfactory; becauſe what power ſoever any ſhall exerciſe in or over the Goſpel-Church to the end of the world, muſt have its riſe and derivation from what was then eſtabliſhed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. However they are ſure of a popular acceptance:

Firſt, Becauſe they bring us to a viſible Judge, and a humane certainty, which moſt men had rather be at, than a labourious enquiry after divine Truth, in the way God hath revealed it in the Scriptures.

And, ſecondly, Becauſe they are poſitions, that land us in a very ſafe harbour, and free us from any danger of ſuffering about thoſe things; he that thinks it his duty to be always of the *Magiſtrates* Religion, is ſo ſecured in that duty, that no Religion can poſſibly ever hurt him; and who ever thinks the *Magiſtrate* is Gods ſubſtitute, to determine all matters of Religion, as he pleaſeth, muſt needs think it a duty to be of his mind.

The ſecond Extream about the *Magiſtrates* Power, is in aſſerting the *Magiſtrate* to have ample concerns about Religion, and a power ſufficient

ſufficient entruſted to him; but the manner in which it is to be exerciſed, is in a punctual ſubſerviency to the Church; that is, they are to determine, and he is to execute; they are to be his eye, and he is to be their hand: As the firſt Extream debaſeth the Church, and all Eccleſiaſtical power under the *Magiſtrates* feet, and makes him the ſole Lord of all; ſo this in another extream makes the *Magiſtrate* a Slave to the Church: this is an unreaſonable Impoſition upon him, and gives him leſs liberty than each private Chriſtian ought to have, to obliege him to put a civil Sanction, and execute by his Authority, whatever the Church decrees, whether he judge it to be right or no; this is only to make him a Sword-bearer to the *Clergy:* This is the great *Engine*, by which the Church of *Rome* has inſlaved ſo much of the World; *Antichriſt* could never have been ſettled in his throne, if Kingdoms had not thus given up their power to him. How ſhamefully upon this pretence, that the Civil power muſt be ſubject to the Eccleſiaſtical, have the *Popes* of *Rome* brought Kings and Emperours, not onely to employ their power as they pleaſed, but to ſuffer all the ſcorns and indignities from them imaginable? The ſtory of what *Hildebrand* did to the Emperour *Henry*, and many others do abundantly ſhew this. The truth is, the carnal Conjunction of the Temporal Power with the Spiritual, is that which has made all Eccleſiaſtical Regiment odious and unſavoury in the noſtrils of the world in all Ages, and hath had no other effect, but to enable the *Clergy*, under a pretext of the power of the Goſpel, to trample (by the power of the World) mankind under their feet. That the Civil *Magiſtrate* ought not to employ his power in ſuch a ſubordination, let theſe things be conſidered:

Firſt, This is to ſuppoſe, either an inſufficiency in that Spiritual Power which Chriſt did at firſt leave in his Church, or elſe that he fails in that Promiſe of *being with them to the end of the world*, and continuing his Preſence, to make his Laws effectual, for the end they are intended: Chriſt hath appointed the means of Converting men to the Goſpel, to be the preaching of it to them: If you will compel men by the Civil power to become converts, it plainly intimates, we judge Chriſts way inſufficient, and uſe the other as what we judge a better. As Chriſt hath appointed Preaching the Goſpel, as the great means to bring men into the Church; ſo he hath appointed Excommunication, as the great means to caſt offenders out of the Church; and force is as unreaſonable in the one, as in the other. The outward advantages a man has by becoming a Chriſtian, lyes in the enjoyment of all Chriſts Inſtitutions; and the puniſhment of all Goſpel crimes, lyes in being caſt out from thoſe priviledges, and undergoing the weight that Chriſt ſhall lay upon the

the Conſcience thereby. When a perſon is excommunicated, to deliver him over to the Temporal power, to be corporally puniſhed, muſt either be, becauſe we think Chriſts puniſhment in that caſe, not enough; or elſe becauſe our own animoſity prompts us to go farther. *Chryſoſtom Serm. de Anathem.* hath a pious and prudent ſaying, *Dogmata impia, & quæ ab Hereticis profecta ſunt, arguere & Anathematizare oportet, hominibus autem parcendum, & pro ſalute eorum orandum:* that is, we muſt confute, and pronounce *Anathema* to the wicked opinions of *Hereticks*, but we muſt ſpare their Perſons, and pray for their Salvation.

Secondly, This way alters the manner of Chriſts rule under the Goſpel, which is in the Spirits and Conſciences of men; 'Tis much of Chriſts glory to rule his Subjects under the Goſpel, by a Spiritual power; 'tis that power makes a man a Chriſtian; 'tis that power in all Goſpel Inſtitutions, that keeps men in their due obedience unto Chriſt, and 'tis that power carries the ſting of the puniſhment, when men are caſt out of the Church; 'tis indeed that power does all under the Goſpel; and to bring in the Temporal Sword, is to make the weapons of the Goſpel, not mighty through God, but mighty through the *Magiſtrates* power, and wholly to alter the nature of the Goſpel, and all its Inſtitutions; 'tis to arm the Church with Weapons Chriſt never gave her, and to make her a Military, rather than a Spiritual Society.

Thirdly, Suppoſe but this truth, That all Churches, even the pureſt, are in the execution of Chriſts Laws, fallible and lyable to miſtake; this Doctrine hath a marvellous tendency to bring the *Magiſtrate* under great tranſgreſſion, & each *Chriſtian* under a poſſibility of ſuch bondage, as the Goſpel no where impoſes on him: If a man be unjuſtly caſt out of a Church, and the *Magiſtrate* proceeds againſt him, he executes an evil Sentence, and does it blindfold, being by this Doctrine an Officer no way competent, nor in any capacity to make a judgement of the truth, or error of it, and ſo cannot poſſibly eſcape a great ſin. A Chriſtian unduly caſt out of a Church, hath this ſecurity againſt ſuch a proceeding, that Chriſt will never ratifie it upon his Conſcience; but by this manner of execution, he is ſure, whether the Sentence be right or no, to fall under as heavy an outward ſuffering, as the *Magiſtrates* Sword can inflict upon him. And by this means it will come to paſs, that men ſhall be more dangerouſly concerned, in their lives & eſtates, by being in the Church, then by being Members of any Society whatſoever.

The Third Extream in this matter, lyes amongſt thoſe, who ſay, *That the Magiſtrate hath nothing at all to do about Religion:* This lyes very wide from truth, and cannot in ſuch a general Poſition be made good, if

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we consider: First, that every man in the World, as he is a Creature, and a Subject to the great God, is bound in his Station, and in Gods way, to promote his honour, and to endeavour that his Will may be done in the World; it would be strange that the *Magistrate*, who is his chief Officer, should be no way concerned to see the Laws, which God gives the World, put in execution, by the Persons, and in the manner he hath appointed it; 'tis not to be imagined, that he that hath the complicated relation of a Christian, and a *Magistrate* to others, should have no care relative to their Spiritual good, 'twere to say the *Magistrate* must not do that which every man else in the World is bound to do.

Secondly, God never since the world began, trusted any with the care of mens bodies, but he entrusted them likewise with some care of their souls: If we look over all the Natural and Moral Relations in the world, such as Parents, Masters, Generals of Armies, we shall ever find it so: Men are to be ruled over as Creatures, that have immortal souls to be chiefly cared for, and they are to be ruled over as such who have a special relation to God, and a homage to pay him, above all the rest of the world; a rule over men without some respect to this, would denominate Mankind into Brutes.

Thirdly, To say the Magistrate hath nothing to do about Religion, is to deny what hath been practised by the Light of Nature before the Law, was practised under the Law suitable to that dispensation, and both commanded, and commended, and is to be practised under the Gospel, sutable to this dispensation, and is foretold as a blessing so to be, and in fact hath been so ever since there hath been a Magistrate Christian in the World.

Having thus considered these hurtful extreams about the Magistrates Power, the last thing to come under consideration, will be the due bounds of a Magistrates Power under the Gospel, that is, how far a Magistrate, being Christian, may improvedly exercise his natural power for the advantage and benefit of the Gospel, and wherein he stands bounded and obliged not to proceed; the preserving a right state whereof, through the torrent of these Extreams, will be of singular moment to the matter in hand.

We have seen that the power of a Heathen and a Christian Magistrate differs nothing at all in kind; a Heathen Magistrate hath the same right, and is bound to do as much in Religion as a Christian, onely the one having more knowledge of God and his Mind, is bound improvedly to exercise his power accordingly: the first thing a Christian Magistrate stands bound to do for the good of Religion, is to afford the

Churches

Churches all negative good; that is, to remove all Oppreſſion from them, and all things that do any way hinder them to enjoy the Inſtitutions of *Chriſt*; He is to give them reſt, that they may be edified, and walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, and lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godlineſs and honeſty: This, as 'tis a ſpecial bleſſing the *Church* does not often enjoy, ſo 'tis one chief part of that benefit it receives by *Chriſtian Rulers*: And this the Light of Nature will eaſily guide a *Magiſtrate* to do for any Religion, of the truth of which he is perſwaded. In the Affirmative, he is not only to ſee that the Goſpel be preached, and all under him fully inſtructed in the truths thereof; to unite all *Chriſtians*, and as much as in him lyes, preſerve peace in the *Church*, to encourage thoſe, he finds moſt zealous, conſtant, and ſincere in the profeſſion of the Goſpel, and by his own example to lead forth his Subjects in all ſound Orthodox Profeſſion and Practice: But to comprehend all in one, He is to endeavour in a Goſpel-way, to ſee all the Laws of *Chriſt* put in execution, and as much as in him lyes, ſee his Will done in the World; he is ſo far from being bound to execute, only what the *Church* will have him, that he is to over-ſee their proceedings, and to take care, as *Chriſts* chief Officer in the World, that all things in the *Church* be duly, and according to *Chriſts* appointment adminiſtred. The Apoſtles words are general and full, *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher Powers*: Whereſoever the higheſt power is, it muſt needs be ſo, unleſs you will have a higheſt, and a higheſt, which will breed inevitable confuſion; the Civil power bidding a man do one thing, and the Eccleſiaſtical another, it hath ever in fact been ſo; but under the *Roman Church*, where the Emperours were made believe, that 'twas the higheſt piece of Religion, voluntarily to yield up their Power to the *Church*, and ſubmit to her direction for the uſe of it, which at firſt they confeſſed, was inherent in the Emperours, and not in the *Church*. Before the Law, not only the Power, but the Exerciſe of the Prieſthood it ſelf, naturally fell into the *Magiſtrate*: 'Twas ſo in *Noah*, in *Abraham*, and in *Melchiſedeck*, who was a King, and a Prieſt. 'Twas ſo in *Moſes*, the Regal and Sacerdotal power were both in him, till they were by God divided between him and *Aaron*; ever ſince which time, the Exerciſes of *Magiſtracy* and *Miniſtry* have been, and are to be diſtinct. 'Twas ſo likewiſe amongſt the *Heathens*, *Homer* tells us of *Princes* and *Heroes*, that Sacrificed and performed the Worſhip to the Gods. In *Rome* 'twas manifeſtly ſo, the firſt *Roman* Kings did the like. Since *Magiſtracy* and *Miniſtry* has been diſtinctly exerciſed, ſtill the Inſpection and Regulation of Religion, and the Officers Eccleſiaſtical, have bin in the *Magiſtrate*. Under the Law 'twas plainly ſo. Under the Goſpel

ſo ſoon as there was a *Chriſtian Magiſtrate* that could exerciſe ſuch a Power, we find it ſo. The Right was the ſame in the *Heathen* powers (which happily was the ground of *Paul's* Appeal unto *Cæſar*) though they could not then exerciſe it. There is nothing more plain, than that there may be a Right, where there is not an Ability to exerciſe it. *Conſtantine* and the *Chriſtian Emperours*, till the *Church* of *Rome* had cheated them into Subjection, took upon them the care and over-ſight of all Religious things, and to ſee all Laws executed. *Conſtantine* uſed to call himſelf, *The general Biſhop*, to take care that all things were duly performed in the *Church*. Amongſt our ſelves we reap the Advantage of our Kings and Princes Care, and Concern, in that enjoyment we have of the *Proteſtant Religion*. This ſhews the great weakneſs on the one hand, of ſuch who ſay, *the Magiſtrate hath nothing to do in Religion*; and the perfect miſtake of thoſe on the other hand, who would have the *Magiſtrate wholly Subordinate to the Church*; and the third extream in thoſe, who would place the *Magiſtrate in ſo ſupream a Power, as upon the matter, to do what he pleaſeth*; will be ſufficiently enervated, if we conſider, That as the *Magiſtrate* is to ſee that executed, that *Chriſt* hath appointed in Religion; ſo he is to bring in nothing of his own, he is punctually tyed up, neither to add, nor diminiſh, neither in the matter, nor the manner; his buſineſs is to ſee Laws executed, not to make Laws, nor change Laws; *Chriſt* has no where granted any ſuch Commiſſion, either to the *Magiſtrate*, or any elſe upon earth; and therefore we come to a right ſtate of the *Magiſtrates* Power, when we conſider him, as Gods chief Officer in the World, directed by the Light of Nature, as well as otherwiſe, to ſee that which God reveals to be his Will, put in execution; and that which comes particularly to the preſent matter in hand, *That he do it under the Goſpel in the manner Chriſt hath appointed:* The manner *Chriſt* hath appointed being as poſitively obliging as the matter; and therefore the Temporal Sword, when 'tis uſed by *Magiſtrates* in the Concerns of the Goſpel, is the *Dead Fly*, that corrupts all their otherwiſe very laudable endeavours. Nor need it ſeem ſtrange, that a *Magiſtrate* ſhould have the care and over-ſight of that, wherein he is not to uſe the Temporal power; as he is to endeavour to ſee that done by others under the Goſpel, (as the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and the like) which he is not to do in his own perſon; ſo he is to ſee that done by the Spiritual means *Chriſt* hath appointed for it, which he is by no means to force the doing of by the Temporal power. He that thinks the *Magiſtrate* cannot be uſeful to the *Church* without the Temporal power, may with as good reaſon ſay, that all other powers in the *Church* are uſeleſs where there is not the Temporal Sword

to

to execute them. All Societies of men are under the Regulation of the higheſt power, but yet may act, and ought to do ſo, by diſtinct and proper wayes, and by means ſuitable to each. A Colledge of Phyſicians in a State, are under the Regulament of the higheſt power; and yet it were very abſurd to force them to give Phyſick, as a thing in it ſelf both unnatural and unreaſonable. The caſe is much more ſo in the *Church*, nor can any Inſtance fully reach it, becauſe the *Church* is a diſtinct thing of it ſelf, and hath powers proper and peculiar to it, in which it is ſo compleat, that it can ſubſiſt without the *Magiſtrate*, as it did in the *Primitive* times. The *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Power*, are things perfectly in themſelves diſtinct, and ought in their Exerciſe to be kept ſo. The higheſt Power governs men as men by the Temporal Sword, but as *Chriſtians* by the Spiritual, and by ſeeing all things done in Religion by thoſe Spiritual means *Chriſt* hath appointed; all which means he may make uſe of, though exerciſed by other hands than his own; and ſtill in a ſubordination to him, as *Chriſts* chief Officer in the World, who hath the charge incumbent upon him, to ſee all that *Chriſt* hath commanded duly put in execution; and according to the revelation God hath made of his bleſſed Mind unto him, he is to endeavour by due and proper Goſpel-means to bring all his Subjects to a cloſure with it, and a ſincere and real acceptance of ſuch Truths. But the *Magiſtrate* himſelf, with the power proper to him, which is the Temporal, is not immediately to act any thing in the *Church*; what he does, is in a Collateral way; that were to bring a new Officer into the *Church*, and a Power new and forreign to execute the Goſpel, contrary to Nature, and totally deſtructive to the Being of it. The *Magiſtrate* hath wayes, ſuch as *Chriſt* thought ſufficient, to promote the good of Religion, and propagate the growth of the Goſpel, without drawing the Civil Sword, which will make no more impreſſion in Spiritual Concerns, than it will do upon a Ghoſt, that hath no real body. In the execution of thoſe he ought to acquieſce, but if not content therewith, he will uſe the Civil power to force men to Believe and Worſhip according to his Light, and will take Offenders in the *Church*, and puniſh them by his Temporal power; What is this but to Lord it over Gods heritage, and to make the Goſpel-*Church*, and being a Member of it, a thing of greater, outward, carnal fear, bondage, and ſubjection to men, than ever the Law was? This uſe of the Temporal power, is the ſting that wounds all Liberty of Conſcience, and totally overthrows it. If the *Magiſtrate*, where I live, be an *Arrian*, a *Socinian*, or in any ſuch error, while he enforceth this, but in a Goſpel-way, and in *Chriſts* way of enforcing Truth, only by Inſtruction and Perſwaſion; this does not mortally wound me, this does

not *Petere jugulum* of my liberty to keep to the Truth; but if he come to eſtabliſh it by the Civil Power, and by that ſuppreſs all elſe as error, my liberty in a differing perſwaſion is totally gone. The admiting the Magiſtrate to uſe the Temporal power in executing his judgment about Religion, hurries every man out of the world that is not of his mind: for whatſoever will make a man an Heretick, will bring a man to the Stake, and every opinion, that is not the Magiſtrates, muſt needs make a man ſo. If *Chriſt* have enjoyned the Temporal Power to be uſed, it muſt have its utmoſt effect, not only upon Hereticks within, but much more upon thoſe that are Infidels without the *Church*. If the Magiſtrate be appointed to uſe ſuch a Power, he muſt not tolerate any thing upon any terms, nor exempt it from the laſh of that Power. Where will he find a Rule in the Goſpel to bear with ſome kind of Hereſies, and not with others? He muſt not make ſubmitting to a Civil penalty, to compenſate for an Hereſie, unleſs Chriſt had appointed that as the puniſhment of it; That's a ſelling of ſin, and making a bargain for iniquity, for his own advantage and profit. That therefore which the Magiſtrate under the Goſpel may not do (and without him I am ſure the *Church* cannot do) in which Negative reſtraint upon him, all liberty of Conſcience is comprehended, and the freedom *Chriſt* hath ſo dearly and fully purchaſed, compriſed; and which is chiefly intended to be made good by this Diſcourſe, ſhall be declared in this following *Poſition*; which is:

That no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel men, to any part of the Doctrine, Worſhip, or Diſcipline of the Goſpel.

The proof of which ſhall lye in the Reaſons following. Firſt, 'Tis a thing againſt the light of Nature ſo to do; and if the Magiſtrates Power be grounded in the light of Nature, then to do a thing againſt that light of Nature, muſt needs be very *Heterogeneal*, and wholly out of his compaſs; it muſt needs be againſt the common light and reaſon of mankind, to force me to believe a thing wholly out of the compaſs of my knowledge and capacity, and which Nature reveals not to me. Such are all Goſpel-truths, they are not like the matters of the Moral Law, but they are things purely Supernatural, and of divine Revelation; ſuch things as from the beginning of the world, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into any mans heart to conceive of:

Theſe

These things the Apostle saith, ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος: *A man with all the endowments of Nature discerneth not, because they are only Spiritually discerned.* No man can call Jesus the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost; Will you punish a man for not having the Holy Ghost? That is no way in his power to get, but is like the wind, that bloweth where and when it lists. 'Tis a strange contradiction to our common reason, to force men about things wholly unknown to them, and out of their own power. If force should be used at any time, it should be to bring men from *Paganism* to *Christianity*, for without that we cannot be saved; but when once *Christians*, we may be saved under different apprehensions; And yet we may not force a man to be a *Christian:* First, because 'tis unlawful; And Secondly, because 'tis impossible. 'Tis not lawful, because 'tis not Christs way of making *Christians*, nor a means by him appointed for that purpose. Secondly, 'Tis impossible, because force upon men will never beget, or change Principles or Opinions. And as we should not force men at the first to the Gospel, because till God reveals it, we are wholly ignorant of it: So we should not force men, that are under the Gospel, to any thing they believe not; for they are as great strangers still to every farther attainment of knowledge in the Gospel, till God please to reveal it, as they were at first to the whole; and therefore the Apostle calls us to *patience in these things, one with another, till God please to reveal himself.* The light of Nature must needs condemn that practice, for another to force me about such things, wherein my own eternal good or ill is only concerned; where it is not to be imagined, that I can have any aim, but my own Salvation, and can hurt none by my Belief, but my self. When I have used rational suitable means to inform another, I ought to acquiesce, it being not a supposition to be made, that a man would willingly design that which he knows will be his own ruine, and which will hurt no body but himself. He that forceth me to a Religion, makes me hate it, and makes me think, there wants reason, and other evidence to evince it. Nature abhors compulsion in Religious things, as a spiritual rape upon the Conscience. No man by the light of Nature was ever angry with another, for not quitting his Conscience, till his judgment was suitably informed, because every man finds it an impossibility in himself so to do. That which some say, *That though we may not force men to believe, yet men may be forced to the outward means of believing*, is very little to the purpose: For if by outward means they mean a bare outward act, distinct from any Religious Worship, no doubt Superiours may command it: But if they mean any Religious means, if the means be such, as my Conscience is not satisfied in, I ought not to be forced to it; if it be such, as I am satisfied

tisfied in, force is altogether needless, and it belongs not to this Discourse.

Secondly, To use force in Religion, is wholly unlawful in any hand whatever, because 'tis no means appointed by *Christ* to bring about any Gospel end; For the Magistrate to enforce the Laws of the Gospel by Temporal power, or compel men into the Gospel by such a power, is to act without the least precept or president, and to induce an Engine to execute the Gospel, contrary to the nature of *Christs* Kingdom (which is not of this world) and contrary to the nature of all Gospel-Institutions. The Magistrate as he should be careful to see the Gospel put in execution; so in the manner, *Christ* in his wisdom hath appointed for the doing of it, which is by his own Institutions, & his own invisible power operating and working with them: The great rule of the Gospel, is a rule of the Spirit in the hand of *Christ* as Mediator; and 'tis a rule in the hearts and spirits of men: and to set up a rule by any humane power, over any part of the Gospel, is highly to derogate from that mediatory dominion of *Christ*; Nay, to use force, is not only to act without, but against the declared mind of *Christ*. Does not *Paul* positively deliver this? *That the weapons of the Gospel are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God.* 'Tis not Faggots and Halters, but Spiritual means, by which men are both to be brought in, and cast out of the Gospel-Church. 'Tis Hearing, and not Forcing, by which Faith is wrought.' The Sword of the Spirit is the weapon by which *Christ* does all, yea, by which he will destroy Antichrist, the greatest Gospel-enemy the world hath produced. Amongst all the Arguments, that are brought to prove the compulsatory power of the Magistrate under the Gospel, the greatest weight is laid upon the practice of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, and what they did under the Law in compelling men to the Worship of God then established: In the due consideration whereof, we shall find the truth in hand no way invalidated, and that what was then done by the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, cannot reasonably be made a rule to Magistrates now under the Gospel, and that the Analogy will no way hold, may be made appear, both from the different station and posture those Kings were in, from all Magistrates now, and also from the different condition of the *Church* then and now, and many circumstances peculiarly relating to both. First, The Worship and Policy of the *Jews*, being in it self Typical, and representative of what was to come hereafter; their Government was likewise so, and in their Kings very eminently: That *David* and *Solomon* did very plainly in the Type represent the Kingly dominion of *Christ*, none will deny; and 'tis as plain, that the very Throne of *David* it self, upon which the succeeding

ſeeding Kings of *Judah* ſate, was likewiſe ſo, there being that Propheſie long before, *That the Scepter ſhould not depart from* Judah, *until* Shiloe *came*; and therefore the power *David* and *Solomon*, and the ſucceeding Kings of *Judah* (for amongſt the Kings of *Iſrael*, after *Solomon*, we find not one concerned for the true Worſhip of God) who were of the lineage of *David*, exerciſed, had a peculiarity in it, that is not applicable to any Magiſtrate now.

Secondly, God was pleaſed in thoſe times, upon all eminent occaſions of Reformation in his Worſhip, and proceedings of that nature, to ſend Prophets to declare his poſitive mind, and to put an end to all doubts, that could be about ſuch things; nay, ſome of the King themſelves were Prophets immediately inſpired, and did not only take care of the Worſhip eſtabliſhed by *Moſes*, but did themſelves by divine Authority, bring in things of a new Inſtitution, into the Worſhip of God; this *David* did, and *Solomon*, in bringing Muſick into the Temple, and ſettling the courſes of the Prieſts, and were divinely inſpired to write part of the Holy Scriptures. No Magiſtrates now can pretend to any ſuch power in themſelves, nor have they any ſuch extraordinary direction to guide them, but are punctually obliged to whatever *Chriſt* hath revealed in the Goſpel; and therefore in this reſpect the Analogy no way holds good.

Thirdly, The ſtate of the *Jewiſh Church*, and *Common-wealth* was ſuch, as wholly differ'd them from all others, ſince that was a *Church* and a State in the very conſtitution of them mixed together; none could be brought into one, but he was a member of the other; nor could a man be caſt out of the *Church*, but he was thereby caſt out of the *State*; to be outlawed, and excommunicated, was there amongſt the *Jews* the ſame thing. *Grotius* expreſſeth it well; *At that time* (ſaith he) *the Wiſdom in Divine and Humane Law was not divided*; and he proves it by this, *As the Magiſtrate did intermeddle in Church Affairs, ſo the Prieſt did intermedle in Civil things: For* (ſaith he) *the Prieſt was a Judge, and did not only give Judgment in Sacred, but in Civil Affairs, being the beſt Interpreter of the whole Law.* And ſaith the ſame *Grotius* farther, *That the Prieſt had Magiſtracy*; this alone may prove in the 17th of *Deut.* and *verſe* 8. *That he is to die, who obeys not the Command of the Prieſt.* 'Tis moſt clear alſo, That *Eli* was chief Prieſt in *Iſrael*, and chief Judge in *Shiloe*. 'Tis not any way to be avoided, but that the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical power lay then interchangeably mixed; and with as equal reaſon may we bring Magiſtracy into the Miniſterial power of the Goſpel, from what the Prieſts then exerciſed, and their example, as to bring ſuch a power in Religion into the Magiſtrates under the Goſpel, from the

the parallel of what thoſe Kings did then. Beſides, the Magiſtratical power was ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the *Jewiſh Church*-Policy, ſo mixed, that it could not be upheld without it, the very Municipal Law of the Nation was their Religion: He that was Chief in the State, muſt needs be Head of the *Church*. They were a Holy People, living in a Holy Land, appointed to Worſhip in one Holy City, and in one Holy place of that City, and to offer upon one Altar in that Holy place. The *Church* of the Goſpel is totally of another nature, perfectly diſtinct from the Civil State, can well ſubſiſt without a relation to it, and is no way intermixed in its Concerns with it; And therefore to ſay all Magiſtrates now, muſt do as thoſe did, that govern'd ſuch a mixed, complicated *Church* and *State* in one, carries no proportion at all of reaſon or equity in it; more then if a man ſhould argue from a *Par ratio*, that what *Moſes* did at firſt amongſt the *Jews* (who was King in *Jeſhuron*) that Kings may now do amongſt *Chriſtians* under the Goſpel.

Laſtly, What was then done, was by Gods Command, and was in a way ſutable to the frame, and ſtate of the *Church* the *Jews* were imbodied in, and lay chiefly in bringing men from Idolatry to the Worſhip of the true God; (for in differences between Sect and Sect amongſt themſelves, there was nothing, that we find, donè at any time, they continued till our Saviours time;) and putting ſuch a kind of Worſhip in execution, as lay in outward carnal Services, and was in every minute particular, exactly ſet down, and determined. Firſt, The ſtate of the Goſpel-Church now, is wholly differing from what that was, and is ſettled upon clear other grounds and principles. Secondly, Here is no command in the Goſpel for the Magiſtrate to do any thing of that nature. Thirdly, Let it be granted as truth, that in parity of reaſon, becauſe Magiſtrates were appointed to take care of Religion then, they are to do ſo ſtill, it muſt of neceſſity be granted alſo, that they muſt do it by the means appointed by *Chriſt* under the Goſpel, as they did heretofore, by thoſe God appointed under the Law. It is an Inference very infirm, That becauſe the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah* compelled men by Gods own appointment, to acknowledge the true God and forſake Idolatry, therefore Magiſtrates now may not only without, but againſt *Chriſts* commands, and the whole tenor of the New Teſtament, compel men to the Spiritual Belief and Worſhip of the Goſpel. The truth is, the Civil power of the Magiſtrate is no means of *Chriſts* appointing, for the carrying on of the Goſpel; the Goſpel in the very nature of it, carries an Antipathy in it to all outward force. Inſtead of all the temporal promiſes, and corporal puniſhments under the Law, *Chriſt* makes this Declaration, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved, and he that believes not, ſhall*

ſhall be damned; That's the language of the Goſpel; Chriſt ſets Hell and Wrath to come before men, and by his Spirit working upon, and convincing the Conſcience, works more admirable effects upon men that way, than all the outward puniſhments in the World could ever bring about; *The Word of Chriſt is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword; and can divide between the Soul and the Spirit, the Joynts and the Marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart.* We have in the *Hebrews*, a very perfect account of Gods dealing with men under the Law, and now under the Goſpel, and the plain difference in the manner of the one and the other, *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *He that deſpiſed the Law of* Moſes, *died without mercy, under two or three Witneſſes: Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under-foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace?* Here is the higheſt offence imaginable againſt the Goſpel; and the puniſhment, as 'tis clear in the next Verſes, is nor *Corporal*, but *Spiritual*, and *Eternal*, and to fall into the hands of the living God himſelf to execute it. He that broke *Moſes* Law, fell but into the hand of man, and ſuffered corporal death; but this offence under the Goſpel brings a man to fall into the Hand of God for eternal death; This ſorer puniſhment he ſpeaks of, cannot be outward or corporal, for there can be no ſorer puniſhment of that kind, than what was afflicted under *Moſes's* Law, to put a man to death; and therefore he ſpeaks of another puniſhment in the nature of it. So *Piſcator* upon the place (*Graviori ſupplicio ſcilicet Eterno*) the Supream puniſhment under the Law, was inflicted by *Moſes* upon the Body, ſutable to that outward ſtate of things; that ſorer puniſhment for offences under the Goſpel, according to the nature of it, is inflicted by God himſelf upon the Soul eternally; and ſo the kinds of the puniſhments under the Law and the Goſpel, ſutable to the offences relating to each, are here clearly diſtinguiſhed.

Thoſe Scriptures that are uſually urged out of the New Teſtament, to juſtifie compulſion in the Magiſtrate, and corporal puniſhment for Spiritual offences, are of ſo little cogency, and ſo apparently wreſted from their native ſenſe, that every eye may (if unprejudiced) perceive it. I will inſtance in two or three of thoſe, chiefly inſiſted on by Mr. *Prinne*, and thoſe who earneſtly contend that way. *Ananias* and *Saphira* were ſtruck with death by *Peter*: therefore corporal puniſhment is to be inflicted under the Goſpel. Who is there that does not ſee that whole buſineſs to be miraculous and extraordinary, as the healing the lame and the blind was. Firſt, The puniſhment is wholly extraordi-

nary; and Secondly, the ground of it so: For it was upon a judgment passed on Hypocrisie, and evil latent in the heart. However, if we will continue that power to any now, we must (I hope) derive it to the Church, and not to the Magistrate. Another Scripture earnestly urged, is that of our Saviour in the 19th of *Luke*, and *verse* 27. *But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should raign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* This speech relates to the Parable before, which is of a Noble-man going into a far Country, to receive a Kingdom, and to return, and then to take an account of all his Servants, what they had done in his absence. What can be more clear, than that this Parable is spoken to set forth Christs Ascension into Heaven, and his Return to Judgment, in the end of the world? And this place is a clear Prophetick expression of that Judgment *Christ* will then execute upon his Enemies both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The words of *Calvin* upon this place are very expres this way, and indeed 'tis not possible to interpret it any other; His words are these, *In this second Part he seemeth specially to reprove the* Jews, *yet he toucheth all, which in the absence of the Master, do bend themselves to fall away. And Christ purposed not only to terrifie such with denouncing of horrible vengeance; but also to keep his in faithful Obedience. For it is no light temptation to see the Kingdom of God shaken by the faithlesness of many. Therefore that we might remain quiet amongst so many tumultuous stirrs,* Christ saith, *That he will come again, and will be revenged, at his coming, of that ungodly falling away.*

Another Scripture pressed to serve for the proof of this, is that wish, not command of *Pauls*, in the 5th of the *Galathians*, *vers.* 12. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you.* This makes as little for the purpose as the other. Some amongst the *Galathians*, highly pressed the observation of the *Jewish* Worship upon them, in Circumcision, and other things; the Apostle bespeaks them to a Gospel-punishment, in the *Jewish* language; Casting out under the *Gospel*, comes in the room of cutting off under the *Law*; the Apostle means a Gospel-rejection, under the *Jewish* terms of cutting off, which was oppositely expressed to those that pressed the observance of the Law. So *Beza* upon the place. Paulus *ad pellicula sectionem alludit, quam ipsi urgebant.* And a little after, *Possumus istud de excommunicatione simpliciter intelligere, qualis fuit illa Incestuosi* Corinthii. Nothing is more usual, than to express Gospel-matters in the Typical language of the *Jewish Church*. So the Saints are called Priests; their Alms, Sacrifices; and we are bid to eat the Passeover. And so in that famous place of our Saviour, where he bids us, *If an Offender refuse to hear the Church, to count him as an Heathen*

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man and a Publican. 'Tis nothing but a Goſpel Precept expreſſed in the *Jewiſh* dialect. Of as little moment, or leſs if it may be, to the purpoſe in hand, are the other Scriptures inſiſted on. Let the New Teſtament be but fairly dealt with, and ſuffer'd to enjoy its own native ſenſe, and we ſhall not find a word to countenance the execution of the Laws of the Goſpel by Temporal force, nor to inflict upon any man corporal puniſhment, for a Spiritual offence committed in the Church. Our Saviour directly tells *Pilate* [and *Paul* to *Timothy* calls it a good confeſſion] *That his Kingdom is not of this World*; (he means no doubt the Kingdom of the Goſpel) and therefore his Empire would no way invade *Cæſars*; though the *Jews* told *Pilate*, *If he let Chriſt go, he was none of* Cæſar's *friend.* His meaning was, That his Kingdom, as Head of his Church, was a Spiritual Kingdom, diſtinct from the world: and that as God governed the world by the Temporal power, in the hand of the Magiſtrate; ſo Chriſt governs his Kingdom by the power of his Spirit, and by Officers and Inſtitutions wholly different and diſtinct from the world, and ſutable to ſuch a dominion. Nothing ſince Chriſts Aſcenſion hath more diſturbed the Chriſtian World, or brought more diſorder into Religion, than mixing thoſe two Dominions in their diſtinct powers; that of the World, and this of the Church together: 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to keep theſe powers diſtinct and ſeveral. The Magiſtrate will be moſt uſeful to the Church, by keeping the Civil power in its due bounds; and the Church will be moſt ſafe and ſecure in the uſe of its Spiritual weapons. Let the Sword of Juſtice govern in one, and the Sword of the Spirit in the other, and men will be moſt happy in both.

That the Laws made to puniſh Offenders corporally under the *Jewiſh Church*, are not now to be executed without making our ſelves debtors to the whole Law, ſufficiently appears. Take an Inſtance in that Law about putting Idolaters to death, where, if we conſider the circumſtances attending it, we ſhall find it impoſſible, nay unlawful now to be executed: Whoſoever tempted another to Idolatry, was not to be concealed, but the perſon tempted was obliged to kill him himſelf, whether he were his Brother, Son, Wife, or whatever Relation it were. In the 13 of *Deut. verſe 9. Thou ſhalt ſurely kill him, thy hand ſhall be firſt upon him, and then the hand of all the people, and they ſhall ſtone him.* And afterwards we find there, whole Cities of Idolaters are to be razed to the ground, and their Children and Cattel utterly deſtroyed. Theſe are Laws, that cannot be now executed under the Goſpel; nay, they are forbidden; for we are bid to *walk in Wiſdom to thoſe that are without, to do good to all men, and to give no offence, neither to* Jew *nor* Gentile.

Nay, Believing Husbands and Wives, are bid to live with their Unbelieving Relations, in hopes to convert them. Who can avoid, seeing that these Punishments, as well as the Promises, were Relative to that People, and that state of things, to preserve them from the rest of the world, and expired with the distinction, *Jew* and *Gentile*.

Thus I have endeavoured to oppose the Magistrates using the Civil Power to force Religion under the Gospel. First, Because 'tis against the Light of Nature; And Secondly, 'Tis not only without, but against the Command of the Gospel so to do. Famous is that saying of *Tertullian* to *Scapula*; *It appertaineth unto the Authority of the Law of Man, and Nature, that every man worship as he thinketh good; and one mans Religion doth not hurt, nor profit another: neither is it any piece of Religion to inforce Religion, which must be undertaken by a man's own accord, and not through violence.* So thought *Tertullian* antiently. So saith *Lactantius*, *Who shall inforce me either to believe what I will not, or not to believe what I will?* So saith *Casidor*, *Religion cannot be forced.* And *Bernard* hath an excellent saying to the same purpose, *Faith is to be planted by perswasion, not obtruded by violence.* *Bede* tells us, That here in *England*, so soon as King *Ethelbert* was Converted by *Austin* the *Monk*, he made a Law, *That none should be compelled to Religion; having understood that Christ's Service ought to be voluntary, and not compelled.*

A Third Reason against using force and compulsion about things under the Gospel, is, Because 'tis not adequate to the Malady; for if the meaning be to make a man forsake Error, and embrace the Truth, 'tis no Remedy suitable to the Disease, nor will it ever reach such a Distemper, or effect such a Cure. The Disease lyes in the Soul, & in the Understanding; the compelling and punishing the Body will never help it; the end will be wholly lost: A man can never be forced to alter or embrace an Opinion, he may deny it, or conceal it; But if he had a desire through fear, or other slavish considerations to do it, yet he cannot, and so a man is compelled to an impossibility. This usually makes Hypocrites, and at last Atheists, but never makes a right Convert: so the Souls of men this way are endangered, the Devils Interest promoted; but neither the salvation of Souls, nor the honour of God, by enlarging Truth, any way furthered. He that useth no other Medium but force to me, makes a Lyon and a Mastiff-Dog as capable of Converting me, and giving Laws to my Understanding, as he. We are bid to *restore persons fallen into error, by a spirit of meekness, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.* So *Paul* to *Timothy*, *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those, that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give repentance.* No man ever

ever yet did any good to himſelf or others, by forcing a man againſt the Law of his own Light and Reaſon. How many that through fear and oppreſſion have gone againſt their Light, have repented openly, to the ſhame and diſgrace of thoſe, who violently obtruded Principles upon them, contrary to what was natively and properly their own.

Take amongſt many, one famous inſtance recorded by *Socrates* in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. The Emperor *Valens*, by threats and menaces to confiſcate and baniſh him, made *Eluſius* Biſhop of *Cyzicum* turn *Arrian*, and approve the Decrees of the Council of *Ariminum*. The effect of it was, *Eleuſius* preſently fell into horror of Conſcience openly at *Cyzicum* recanting what he had done, crying out of the Emperors unjuſt cruelty, and made all men loath ſuch a proceeding. A late Author undertakes to juſtifie the uſe of force in Religion, from the Opinion of Saint *Auſtin*, whoſe Opinion at firſt, as is well known, was, *That it was no way lawful to uſe force to men of differing Opinions in Religion.* The retractation of that, and the change of his mind, was occaſioned by a particular accident at *Hippo*; and it may be, if we conſult all circumſtances, we ſhall find his laſt Opinion had more need of a retractation than his firſt; and yet at laſt he is very poſitive againſt all capital puniſhment, his words are, *Nullis tamen bonis*, 'Tis a thing, ſayes he, *that pleaſeth no good man, that any Heretick ſhould be put to death.* We may ſee by this, how men do curtail and enlarge theſe things, according to their intereſts and particular affections, and ſet bounds at their own pleaſure; ſome are for one kind of temporal ſeverity, and ſome for another: and ſo when we leave the Scriptures, that gives no direction for any, we loſe our ſelves, and wander as the fancies and intereſts of men lead us. But the Authors words are theſe, *Though force* (ſaith he) *will not remove the error, yet it may prevent its ſpreading; Though it do not take away the cauſe, yet it hinders moſt of the miſchievous effects.* The miſchievous effects of an Opinion, is conſidered, as it relates to a man himſelf who is poſſeſſed with it, and as it relates to others, who may be by him infected with it; force doth in no wiſe hinder the ſpreading of an Opinion, for if a man be puniſhed for declaring to others what he thinks is right, and he thinks himſelf bound in Conſcience to declare; others are more eaſily taken, and by his ſufferings made more pleaſed with his Notion, and ſooner become his *Proſelites*; in the other caſe, he that forceth me to deny my *opinion*, ſins in doing it, but I ſin likewiſe, if I comply with him; for ſuch miſchievous effects as relate to the perſon himſelf poſſeſſed with an Opinion, it hinders them not at all, unleſs you can convert him by it; for it either confirms him in one error, or leads him into a worſe: If he ſtand it out, and ſuf-

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ſer, he will be the more rooted in his perſwaſion by it, and be apt to think want of Arguments brings men to Club-Law: If he comply againſt his Light, he runs then into an apparent and certain evil that way. But the Author proceeds, and tells us, *In a little time it will remove the cauſe of the error:* That is to ſay, Forceing men, if you do it long enough, will convert them; and the reaſon he gives, is this, *Becauſe* Paul *ranks Hereſie amongſt the works of the fleſh*; and it is not ſeated ſo ſolely in the mind, but that it hath often no ſublimer motives then other ſenſual tranſgreſſions; & as outward conſiderations are ſometimes the cauſe, ſo they may be the cure of it. That ever any man did change an Opinion, firſt or laſt, by being forced, ſince the World began, is without inſtance, and impoſſible in the nature of the thing to be: One ſayes well, *You may as well cure a man of the Cholick by bruſhing his Coat, or fill a mans belly with a Syllogyſme.* Theſe things do not communicate in matter, and ſo neither in action nor paſſion. But Hereſie is a work of the fleſh, ſo is every miſtake of the Soul; Hereſie is a work of the Soul rather in miſ-believing, than miſ-doing; 'tis a thing in opinion, rather than fact. The Apoſtle, in *Gal.* 5. where Hereſie is reckoned amongſt the works of the fleſh, does not put the diſtinction between works of the fleſh, as things outwardly acted, oppoſite to what is inwardly believed, but by the fleſh he means the corrupt and carnal mind, oppoſite to the Spirit of God; for he ſayes plainly in the Verſe before, *The fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh.* By the fleſh there, he means the corrupt ſtate of man in Soul and Body; ſo that Hereſie may be a work of the fleſh, and yet purely ſeated in the mind: Every corruption in the mind, is a work of the fleſh, and yet as 'tis there only, is in ſome ſence a thing ſpiritual and ſpeculative. But ſaith he, *Outward conſiderations are ſometimes the cauſe of an Opinion, and may be ſometimes the cure of it.* If outward conſiderations, ſutable to a conviction of my underſtanding, have wrought upon my underſtanding, and made me really believe a thing, there is then no proportion at all of reaſon, to ſay, *That force, becauſe 'tis an outward thing, wholly incapable of working upon my underſtanding, may make me as well disbelieve it.* And if thoſe outward conſiderations he means, have not really convinced me, then 'tis not my Opinion: Either outward conſiderations are the ground of ſuch Opinions, or they are not; if they be, they will beſt diſcover themſelves in their effects; ſuch cauſes are beſt ſo known, and only ſo known, and thoſe effects will be obvious, if they be evil, to a due puniſhment; if they be not the cauſe of them, 'tis firſt, a ſuperlative want of charity, to make our ſelves evil judges of other mens hearts, and then an eminent piece of injuſtice, to puniſh men upon

upon ſuch a falſe ſuppoſition. He that will take upon him to judge the grounds of any mans Principles, which he knows not, may make any Opinion have what Original he pleaſeth. 'Tis a moſt abſurd thing to believe any man for outward reſpects, ſhould ſuffer all reproach and perſecution: You may as well ſay, all the Martyrs ſuffered onely to ſet up a Pillar, and get themſelves a name; 'tis obvious enough to any impartial eye, thoſe outward conſiderations are more probable to be mens temptations that go another way.

Fourthly, No man under the Goſpel ought to be compelled to believe or practiſe any thing: [and if not to believe, then not to practiſe, for the practice ought to correſpond with, and be but the counterpart of the belief; 'tis ſtrangely unreaſonable to require uniformity in the practice, where there is variety and difference in the Judgement; 'tis to bid a man go directly againſt his Light; 'tis miſerably to rend a man into two pieces, his Conſcience in one part, and his outward man and practice in another part: God arreſts him, and draws him in a way ſutable to his rational Soul one way, and men by means wholly contrary another: Who, think we, has the greateſt right; and whether is it better to obey God or man in ſuch a caſe? Thoſe that thus impoſe upon men, do what in them lies to ruine them eternally.] I ſay, 'tis not reaſonable to compel men to believe or practiſe; (for practice ſhould ſuppoſe belief,) Becauſe God tells ſo very often, *He only accepts a willing Service in his Worſhip, and abhors all other*; God deteſts the ſmell of a Sacrifice, where the heart is not, where the heart is far from him; and 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be near him, where a man is compelled directly againſt his own judgment. How much does the beauty of the Goſpel lie in this, that Gods People are made by him a willing People, and that God hath his Creature wholly in his Service: Such are the converts of the Goſpel, where every man is in his rational Soul ſo ſatisfied, enlightened, and convinced, that he does all freely: 'Tis a ſevere thing to enjoyn me by penal Laws, to worſhip God in a way I neither like, nor he accepts; which he does not, though it be what he has appointed for the matter; if I come not in the manner he has likewiſe appointed to it, I ſhall neither pleaſe him, nor advantage my own Soul. That was the caſe of the Jews, when God hated their ſolemn aſſemblies, and ſaid, *Incenſe was an abomination to him.* 'Tis uſually falſe worſhip that needs force; 'twas *Jeroboam* that upon Politick grounds began to force a Religion, and 'tis ſaid of him, *He made* Iſrael *to ſin, by compelling them to* Dan *and* Bethel. If men intend to make converts to God, they muſt not do more for him, than he does for himſelf; he never violates the liberty of the rational Soul, but approves

proves things to the underſtanding; if they under this pretext intend to make Proſelytes to their own power, 'tis very ſinful.

Fifthly, The practice of Chriſt and the Apoſtle, poſitively contradicts this courſe; they could have commanded what power they had pleaſed, if that had been the way of ſettling the Goſpel in the world: Chriſt would have no fire come down from Heaven, but that of the Holy Ghoſt; nor no Sword uſed in the Church, but that of the Spirit; he bids them *Teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c.* that is his way of initiating men into the Church; Not as the *Spaniards* Convert the *Indians*, who leave them no choice, but to be Baptized or Murthered. Men are firſt to be enlightened, and then led into conformable practice. *Paul* prayes for men, *That the eyes of their underſtandings might be enlightened.* And our Saviour when he preached, called for *an eye and an ear, to hear and diſcern his Doctrine.* 'Tis no matter for either, where force is the *Medium.* This deſerves to be very well weighed, that the Apoſtles never urged the Truths of the Goſpel, in their infallible Miniſtry of them, upon farther or other terms than perſwaſion and ratiocination, and gave every man freedom of debate, and counted it a noble thing in the *Bereans* to examine the Scriptures, *Whether the things they preached were ſo or no.* After all means uſed, every man was left to his own Light. *Paul* profeſſeth he was *not Lord of any mans Faith.* The truth is, that part of the Soul, where Faith and Conſcience is ſeated, cannot be reached by any compulſion; and therefore force reaching but to our outward practice, there can be no other end of it, but to make us ſuffer, or elſe practiſe contrary to what we believe.

Sixtly, Forceing men to a Religion, which is wholly ſupernatural, and impoſing Principles upon them, which are out of the compaſs of Moral Light, as all Goſpel-principles are, ſuppoſeth a perfect infallibility in the Impoſors, and the thing impoſed, or elſe 'tis ſtrangely unreaſonable; to force men againſt their own Light to be guided by ours, unleſs we are ſure we cannot miſtake, is a ſtrange abſurdity. There is ſome excuſe for being guided by a miſtake of our own, if it be the beſt Light we have, but there is no excuſe for being guided by a miſtake of another mans. Three ſorts of men there have been in the world, eminent for Impoſition in Religion, and common diſcretion taught them, that the neceſſary ſupport of ſuch Impoſition, muſt be a pretended infallibility in themſelves and their Doctrines. Such were the *Jewiſh Rabbies* of old, who had ſo deluded the people, that *Luther* tells us, *The* Jews *thought they were bound to believe what their* Rabbies *taught, though they ſhould ſay, the right hand was the left, and the left the right.* Such alſo was *Mahomet* and his *Muftie's*, who impoſe all upon the ground

ground of infallibility; *Mahomet* at the first laying this down as a Maxime, that there was to be no debate, nor discourse of what he prescribed; and his *Mufties* subdue the people by carrying on the same ever since. *Grotius* gives a very full account of this, in his Book of the *Truth of Christian Religion. The Third Sect. Famous for Imposition are the Popes and Priests of the Roman Church, and they with the Hammer of Infallibility beat down all Opposition.* That's a refuge never fails to justifie things against Scripture, Reason, and the common Senses of man; That the arrogant assumption of infallibility, since the time of Christ and his Apostles, is nothing else but a Political cheat upon the world; God by his Providence, in fact, as well as otherwise, hath made it clear to us, since those who pretend to it, have as often contradicted each other, and erred, even in the Opinions each of other, as any people in the World. God in his just Judgment leaving those that pretend to be so much above all men, to appear as weak, and as depraved men, as any the world has. But Imposition, where infallibility is not pretended, nor claimed, must needs be but weakly underset. He that imposeth a Religion upon me, intends I should take his Light instead of my own; Imposing a Religion upon me, supposeth a Duty in me of perfect Subjection, or else 'tis ridiculous, and signifies nothing: admitting a man to use his own Light in judging, destroyes the Being of Imposition in Religion, upon any tolerable grounds of Reason; and no body is to be obeyed in whatever they Command, but those that are infallible. Who ever it be, the Church or the Magistrate, that confesseth himself fallible, must needs admit a possibility of mistake, and so gives ground unquestionable, to reason and consider what is offer'd to me, and to what purpose will that be but farther to ensnare me, if I must necessarily obey? And unless, if I discover the weakness and mistake of what is put upon me, I may refuse it. Amongst the Protestant Churches, where Infallibility is not claimed, and this Doctrine taught, that if any man command any thing sinful [of which every mans Conscience is likewise acknowledged the Judge] we are to suffer passively, and not obey actively. There can be no other success of Imposition, but to make me suffer for being an honest man, and following the Light of my own Conscience: for if the thing enforced be according to my own judgment, forceing me to it is needless; if it be not, I am bound by principles, acknowledged by all, not obey, and so the event must needs be my suffering in performing my duty. Nay, suppose further, that the thing enjoyned be infallible in its own nature, and the person enjoyning it before in that very act, yet still I am convinced in my reason of both those, they are to me as if they were not

ſo, and I ſhall never upon that account yeeld implicite obedience; and when I am convinced of ſuch an *infallibility*, my own reaſon, without any other motive, forceth me into ſubjection, as that which is beſt for me. No man can or ought to command me to alter my Judgment and Conſcience, guided by the beſt Light I have, till he can ſhew me, that as I am fallible, ſo he is infallible, and that he is ſo in that act of impoſing a Religion upon me; my own Light is more ſafe to me, than any other mans, that is not ſo intruſted, and is but equally fallible with my ſelf, though in knowledge never ſo far above me. He that owns, he may be miſtaken as well as I, and yet would have me obey what he commands, againſt what I believe, would at the ſame time make me both a ſinner and a fool; a ſinner to God, and a fool to my own reaſon; a ſinner to depart from my own Conſcience, by which God expects I ſhould be guided, and by which I ſhall hereafter be judged; and a fool to eat by another mans taſt, and to part with my own reaſon, without any aſſurance of being guided by a better. A Magiſtrate impoſeth Uniformity in Religion, acknowledgeth himſelf not infallible, but that he may be under miſtakes; acknowledgeth likewiſe that no man is bound to obey him actually in any thing ſinful; acknowledgeth that the Judgment of what is ſinful lies in every mans own Conſcience, as to his particular actings, and that every mans Conſcience, though erroneous, is to be followed till better informed. Take the coherence of theſe things, which are all granted Truths amongſt us, and the reſult will be two-fold; Firſt, That a man that cannot in Conſcience conform to ſuch an impoſed Uniformity, as thinking it ſinful, is puniſhed for doing what is acknowledged to be his duty. Secondly, There can never be any other end in forcing Uniformity, where ſuch Principles are taken for granted, but to bring ſuch men into ſuffering, who reſolve to keep their integrity.

Seventhly, Every man in the World is to be a Judge for himſelf, in all matters of the Goſpel-Religion, and ſo ought not to be forced to believe or practiſe any thing he is not convinced of. To what end is preaching or diſcourſing to men, but that they may judge of what is ſaid? A man being obliged to anſwer for himſelf, he muſt needs be ſo to judge for himſelf. And this Foundation once laid, upon which many of our moſt irrefragible Arguments againſt the *Papiſts* are built, all pretenſions of impoſing upon men, contrary to their own Judgments and Conſciences, will with apparent reaſon fall to the ground: For if I ſtand obliged to God, as a Creature by him enabled and fitted ſo to do, to make a Judgment within my ſelf, according to the meaſure of Light I have of all things I believe or practiſe in Religion, then I can never

never come under an obligation, to obey any commands that compel me againſt my Light, nor ever to follow the Judgments of others, farther than I am convinced by it, and it becomes my own. Now to make this evident, that every man under the Goſpel is bound at laſt to judge for himſelf, in all things relating to God and his own Soul, let theſe things following be conſidered.

Firſt, Every perſon in the World is under a Scripture command, *to prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good*; What ever comes from Miniſters by way of inſtruction, or from Magiſtrates by way of command, 'tis a duty to give a due reſpect to it, and ſeriouſly to weigh it, and at laſt, by the beſt Light we have, to make a judgment of it, and ſettle the Conſcience about it; but no way are we bound to follow blindfold, whether we like it or not: To prove and examine, ſhows a neceſſary uſe of reaſon, and an act of the underſtanding, in weighing and pondering; and to hold faſt in chooſing and determining. We are bid *to obey God, rather than man.* That Command can never be put in practiſe, but by judging what is of God, and what is of man; and it muſt neceſſarily refer to a Judgment of our own; for all mens pretence is, that what they enjoyn, is of God.

Secondly, Every man is bound to do, what ever he does in Religion, in Faith: for that the Rule is poſitive, *Whatſoever is not of Faith, is ſin*; *He that doubts is damn'd if he eat*; to do in action in Faith, is to do it upon a judgment made within my ſelf, that what I do, is that I ought to do, and that I perform my duty there. And herein I muſt neceſſarily be my own Judge, no other mans Faith can ſo ſerve my turn, as to excuſe me from ſin; If any thing be commanded me contrary to my own Judgment, I can never obey it in Faith, and ſo never obey it without ſin; the ground of all Faith lies in the information and ſatisfaction of the Judgment; without the concurrence of that no action in Religion can ever be done in Faith, and ſo never be done as it ought to be done. And therefore it is that the Apoſtle pronounced him *happy, that condemneth not himſelf in the thing that he alloweth.* A man through an erroneous Judgment may do a thing in Faith, and yet do it ſinfully: his Faith will not excuſe him; but yet he is bound to exerciſe Faith in every thing he does. He that doth any action without Faith, ſins in it; he that doth an ill action in Faith, hath an excuſe for it; thereby *à tanto*, though not *à toto*; ſo that in the one, Faith leſſens the ſin of the action, and in the other makes it compleatly good.

Thirdly, Every man muſt needs be a Judge for himſelf, becauſe God will accept or not accept, and deal with him here and hereafter, according to what his own Judgment was, and his ſutable conforming

himſelf thereto. For this we have a plain Scripture, Every man ſhall give an account of himſelf to God; every mans underſtanding is his talent, God expects he ſhould imploy it, and not hide it, and accordingly deals with men; *Where much is given, much is required; and where little is given, little is required:* Whence comes the ſatisfaction of Conſcience in this World, but that while we walk ſincerely according to our Light, we reſt ſatisfied of an acceptance with God, and we find accordingly God accepteth ſuch, and abhors an Hypocrite. That God will hereafter judge men according to the knowledge they have, and the Judgment they make within themſelves, the Scripture is every where clear. *He that knows his Maſters Will and doth it not, he ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* God will judge men out of their own mouths, and out of their own breaſts; If then God deals with men here, and judges them hereafter according to the Light they have, 'tis that ſure that ſhould be the rule of our living. To ſay, I did what others bid me, and never judged within my ſelf, what God required from me; Nay, when I was convinced, he required the contrary from me, will be but a poor excuſe, when mens Conſciences ſhall come upon the Stage, to do the Office of excuſing or accuſing in that great day. Our Divines ſay very right, when they tell us, every mans Light is to be his guide; if it be falſe and erroneous, he lies under ſin, becauſe 'tis his duty to be better informed; but till he is ſo, 'tis his duty to purſue that light he has, as the leſſer evil.

Fourthly, To ſay a man is not to judge for himſelf, is to unman him, and change him from a rational Creature to a Bruit; What has God lighted ſuch a Candle in man as knowledge and underſtanding for, but to judge and diſcern by, and be a guide to him? God that has given a man an ability to judge, does he ever forbid, nay, does he not alwayes enjoyn the uſe of it that way? Beſides 'tis impoſſible that a man (ſuppoſing him a reaſonable Creature) ſhould conſent to any thing without paſſing firſt an act of his Judgment upon it; he that yeelds up himſelf to the infallibility of *Rome*, paſſes a Judgment firſt, that 'tis beſt to do ſo; and therefore when men are perſwaded to joyn themſelves in the *Roman* Church, and truſt wholly to that, in believing whatever the Church believes, they are firſt admitted to judge, that 'tis beſt to do ſo; and are made firſt Judges for themſelves, before they reſign up their Judgment to others; to what end elſe were all perſwaſion and reaſoning about ſuch a matter? The *Papiſts*, while they profeſs againſt this private Judgment, as a deteſtable thing, that every man ſhould be a Judge for himſelf, they cannot deny, but that every man is actually ſo; and therefore *Bellarmine* flies to this ſorry ſhift, he ſayes, *Before*

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men are in the Church, they must judge for themselves; but when they are once in the Church, they must resign themselves to her Infallibility. The *English* of which is, *That before a man is a* Romanist, *he may use his Reason; but after must be led and driven like a Bruit.* And the truth is, A Church Constituted with an implicite Belief, under an imposed Infallibility, differs little from a dumb Herd of Cattel. Either in such a case I make use of my Reason, or I do not; If I do not, I cease to be a man under the denomination of a rational Creature: If I do, I must necessarily be a Judge for my self; for if I am guided by another judgment than my own, as that I think best for me; there is as clear an act of my judgment in so doing, as if I were punctually directed by my own.

This we call Knowledge in men, God hath given to taste Principles and Notions, as the Mouth tasteth Meates; take away once the use of this taste, and you take away the noblest Accomplishment of a man: You make a man, created in honour, if he do not understand, like a Beast that perisheth; as the Eye guideth the Body, so the judgment of the Understanding guides the Soul; force a man once from the use of this, and you betray him into a dark Chaos of slavery, and bruitish subjection, and render him an object fit for the same scorn and contempt, that *Sampson* found, when he had lost his two eyes. By these things we may plainly discern, that the necessity of every mans being a Judge for himself in divine things, is grounded both upon Scripture and Reason; and that 'tis not only lawful, but a positive Duty, God expects the performance of, and obliges every man living to; and this being so, for any Power on Earth to compel men to believe or practise contrary to their Judgment and Conscience, must needs be both unlawful and unreasonable.

Lastly, The ill success force and imposition in Religion hath ever had, and which it hath a necessary tendency to have, may very well make us out of love with it; there can possibly be no other effect of it, but either to debauch men in their Consciences, or bring violent Persecutions upon their Persons and Estates. If the first, Those that impose, bring a guilt upon themselves, and partake of the sin, as being the great occasion and causers of it. So did *Jeroboam*, when he made *Israel* to sin, the guilt stuck to himself, as well as the people. If the second, Men are sufferers from men, for doing their duty to God, and part with their Estates, because they cannot with their integrity, and in this case the punishment falls upon the Sufferer, but the guilt still upon the Imposer. Either a Magistrate imposing in Religion, is to be obey'd in whatsoever he Commands, or not; If he be, we shall

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then excuſe thoſe that obey'd *Jeroboam*, and caſt reproach upon all the Martyrs, that have ſuffered for refuſing the ſinful Commands of Superiours. If they be not, There muſt be then ſome judgment, when they are to be obey'd, and when not; and that can be no other, than every mans own Conſcience; and if every mans own Conſcience, and the Light of it, is to be his Rule, by which he is to judge: Then when ever I refuſe to obey a Command in Religion, becauſe my Conſcience tells me, 'tis ſinful, I am plainly puniſhed for doing my duty, and following that Light God hath given to guide me. Nay, Suppoſe my Conſcience be erroneous, 'tis confeſſed by all, 'tis a ſin not to follow it, till better informed, and if ſo, I am ſure 'tis likewiſe a ſin to force me out of it. *Conſcientia quamvis errans ſemper ligat ita ut ille peccet qui agit contra conſcientiam quoniam agit contra voluntatem Dei quamvis non materialiter & vere tamen formaliter & interpretive.* Ameſ. de Ca. Con. If we look upon this practice in the Roman Church, where 'tis in its Meridian. What a Maſſacre of Souls hath it made? What darkneſs and miſerable ignorance is grown up in the Layety by it, and amongſt the Clergy what pride, corruption, and tyranny? Where it has been practiſed in the Reformed Churches, it has introduced nothing but diviſions, and animoſities, and the ſad effects of them; thoſe who have been freed from the Roman Impoſition, and enlightened in the Proteſtant Truths, being leſs able to endure Impoſition, then any; being by their departure from *Rome*, furniſhed with Principles, that do wholly overthrow any ſuch power, by whomſoever exerciſed. How little hurt would variety of Opinions about Religion do in the world, if it were not for this? What hurt could any mans Opinion do me, if he uſed no other Weapons, than Reaſoning and Diſcourſe? 'Tis the impoſing Opinions, makes them pernitious and troubleſome to the world, and makes every party ſtrive to get the Magiſtrate on their ſide, that they may ſuppreſs the reſt, and turn Religion into a worldly intereſt: Religion troubles no body, as Chriſt left it, but as Men make it. By this practiſe men of differing judgements in Religion, can never live together in the world, nor enjoy the great advantages, they might afford one to another in civil Concerns, and in Religion too, ſo far as they agree; becauſe their Conſciences will not let them come up to the practice of an impoſed Uniformity in all things. How different from this were the thoughts of *Paul*, he bids us *joyn together, ſo far as we agree, and in other matters wherein we do not agree, to wait till God ſhall reveal himſelf to us.* What an unreaſonable thing is it, to oblige Chriſtians, either to ſuffer, or follow all the changes made by humane Powers in Religion, upon what Worldly or Political ends ſoever; to have the Con-

Conſcience floating about, at the Magiſtrates pleaſure, as his property, which is only Gods peculiar. Thoſe that lived in the dayes of *Henry* the Eight, *Edward* the Sixth, Queen *Mary*, and Queen *Elizabeth*, had occaſion enough to experience this; who muſt either have withſtood a conformable practice with ſuffering, or elſe ſurely have been ſometimes out of the way. But that which ſhould put us perfectly out of all charity with the uſe of force in Religion, is when we conſider the true Worſhip of the Goſpel can never be eſtabliſhed by it, You may eſtabliſh a falſe Worſhip, or a formal out-ſide Worſhip, but never make ſuch Worſhippers, as Chriſt ſpeaks of, when he ſaith, *The true Worſhippers under the Goſpel, are ſuch, who worſhip the Father in Spirit, and in Truth.* You may eſtabliſh a falſe Worſhip, that is a worſhip of mens appointing; for if they be but outwardly obey'd, in what they Inſtitute, they look no farther. *Jeroboams* buſineſs was to keep the people from *Jeruſalem*; if they came but to *Dan* and *Bethel*, he cared for no more; he little minded the Religion he had ſet up, for he made Prieſts of the meaneſt of the People; his end was Political, to bring men into ſubjection to himſelf. You may alſo eſtabliſh a formal Worſhip, you may by force make men Hypocritically conform to the out-ſide of true Worſhip; you may force men to the Sacraments, but without they be qualified with thoſe Prærequiſites God requires, inſtead of performing an acceptable Service, you force them to commit a great Sin.

That you cannot by force eſtabliſh the right Goſpel-Worſhip, appears by theſe two things. Firſt, 'Tis a Spiritual Worſhip: And, Secondly, 'tis a voluntary Worſhip. Firſt, 'Tis a Spiritual Worſhip, there is no one part of Goſpel-Worſhip lyes in the bare outward performance of any Duty; The *Word* (*Paul* ſaid) *did not profit, becauſe 'twas not mixed with Faith.* In Hearing, Praying, receiving Sacraments, and all others, there is more required than the bare outward act, 'tis Faith in theſe things, and that which is Spiritual in them, that gives them an acceptance before God, and that men cannot be forced into; you can never compel into that which is purely Spiritual. Secondly, 'Tis a voluntary Worſhip, the Goſpel is a Proclamation made to *every one that willeth, to eate and drink of the bread and water of life.* 'Tis the very evidence of Chriſts power under the Goſpel, *That his People are made a willing People*; and therefore the Service of the Goſpel cannot be forced: 'Tis a contradiction to ſay, *That may be well done by compulſion, that ought to be freely and voluntarily done.*

Two things are with great vehemency oppos'd to this, and which do indeed contain the greateſt ſhew of Reaſon for compulſion in Religion, of all the Arguments brought for it. Firſt, 'tis ſaid, *That compelling*

men to the outward means of Religion, is a way God often useth to work inward Conversion. Secondly, *That though it do not so work, yet a bare outward compliance is acceptable to God, and blessed by him; and for this the example of* Ahab's *humiliation, and the* Ninevites *Fast, is brought.*

To the first, I say, That some things under the Gospel are as well Moral, as Religious; and have a foundation in the Light of Nature, as well as in the institution of the Gospel; and to these, men may be commanded by the Magistrate. As hearing is an act purely Moral, as well as Divine; A man may be enjoyned to hear the Gospel preached, without being forced to give his assent to it. The Light of Nature guids the Magistrate to instruct his Subjects in what ever he thinks for their eternal good, and the Light of Nature obligeth every man to hearken to every providential instruction God affordeth, and improve it for his good. A man that is only commanded to hear and receive instruction, is dealt with as a rational Creature, and forced to nothing; the judgment is still left in himself. A man may hear, and be no way concluded; hearing is in order to choice and determination. But such things as are purely of a Gospel-Institution, and are perfectly supernatural, to these men may not be any way compelled, nor can we ever expect a blessing upon it; First, Because instruction, and not compulsion, is the way Christ hath appointed to bring men, and fit them to partake of all Gospel-Ordinances. Secondly, Because a man joyning himself to the Gospel, and partaking in the Ordinances and Worship of it, upon no other ground but compulsion, and is in his heart all the while either ignorant of it, or against it, sins in all he does; and therefore though God can over-rule the sins of men to good ends, yet must not we do evil that good may come of it, nor anticipate Converts to the Gospel by undue means. God can work mens conversion by any means, or without means, but yet we are bound to seek mens conversion by such means as God hath appointed for that end, and left us under an Obligation to prosecute. Mr. *Prynne*, who is earnest for compulsion, and corporal punishment under the Gospel, when he is told, That it is not a way to make Converts, and to work upon the understanding; replies, *That corporal sufferings, afflictions, and pressures upon the outward man, are an usual means of Gods sanctifying and saving men.* 'Tis true, a means that he over-rules, and a means he reserves in his own hand, to use as he pleaseth, but no means appointed in the Gospel for us to use, and so we cannot expect the concurrance of Gods Operation, which can only make it effectual upon it; because God many times sanctifies the pain and sickness of mens Bodies, and the sufferings and losses in their Estates and Reputations, to the saving of their Souls. We may

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not (I hope) bring theſe things upon men for that end, becauſe they are not means God hath intruſted us with the uſe of; nor has indeed any outward force upon the Body a natural tendency in it ſelf to alter a mans mind, but rather the contrary; but God by his influence upon it, can over-rule it that way, and unleſs it be by him a means appointed, that ſo we may expect ſuch an operation, 'tis both unlawful and unreaſonable to make uſe of it. In ſhort, if by compelling men to outward means, be meant onely to compel a man to a bare outward moral action, and ſuch are all things relating to inſtruction, men may be commanded to it: If by means be meant a Religious Goſpel-means of Chriſts Inſtitution, and purely relating to the Goſpel, ſuch as the Sacraments, and the like, no man ought to be compelled to them, nor can we expect any good from ſuch a compulſion, farther than as God is pleaſed to bring good out of evil.

For the ſecond thing, That though compulſion do not work real converſion, yet an outward conformity, though there be nothing elſe, is pleaſing to God; that is, That to compel a man by force to profeſs he believes that which he no way believes, and to practiſe that which he no way likes, is a Reformation God approves of, this I utterly deny; unleſs it can be made appear, that God is pleaſed with Hypocriſie, accepts the outward man, where the heart and the inward Man is far from him, and has no better means to bring men into the Church, than unreaſonable compulſion, which muſt needs beget an unreaſonable ſervice. As ſuch a Conformity can never pleaſe God in the perſons conforming, ſo neither in the perſons impoſing. Not in the perſons conforming, becauſe they do it, not from a right Principle, nor to a right end they do it, either without knowledge ignorantly, or againſt knowledge unwillingly. Beſides, he that comes to partake of any Goſpel-Ordinance in an undue manner [which he muſt needs do, that comes only by compulſion] ſins in the very act: He that receives the Sacrament without a due qualification, ſins in the very act; and therefore ſuch conformity may ſatisfie men, but can never pleaſe God. Not in the perſons impoſing, becauſe they do not execute any Law of Chriſts in ſo doing, and therefore it will be ſaid, *Who required this at your hands?* The forcing an outward Reformation in manners, is quite of another nature, that the Magiſtrate may and ought to do, and is a thing highly pleaſing to God, a thing taught by the Light of Nature, commanded by God ſo to be, and a thing that is well done both in thoſe that command, and thoſe that obey: when the bare outward act of evil is reſtrained and forborn, and the contrary commanded and practiſed. The

forcing men to refrain from the practice of gross evil and wickedness, though they do it in Hypocrisie, has a wide difference from the forceing men to perform Gospel-Duties in Hypocrisie. Moral Actions are positively good and evil in their own nature; Gospel-Duties performed, are only so, as they are circumstantiated. And therefore the two Instances of *Ahab*, and the *Ninevites* will no way fit this matter; What was done by the *Ninevites*, for ought appears, was well done, with all the circumstances that should make it to be so; for our Saviour saith, *They repented at the Preaching of* Jonah.

What *Ahab* did, will be clearly differenced in two things; First, it was a voluntary action; And Secondly, it was only a Moral action: 'Twas voluntary, for it arose from the dictates of his own Conscience, upon what the Prophet *Elijah* said to him. And Secondly, it was purely a Moral act, his Humiliation was no other; He himself was an Hypocrite, and his Service was Hypocritical, and abominable in the sight of God; yet the outward act of his Humiliation was in it self good, and God rewards it with an outward blessing. That men may be compelled about actions Morally good and evil, is out of doubt, and that God does likewise with outward blessings and judgments reward and punish Moral good and evil, is also plain. But herein lyes the difference of forcing men in things Moral, and things Divine: In things Moral, the action in it self, however circumstantiated, is positively good or evil. Things of Divine Institution are quite otherwise; there the manner of the performance makes the Action good or evil. He that Sacrificeth an Oxe, is as if he killed a Man; He that killeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck. Where the manner of performing the Command is not observed, as well as the bare outward act of performance. And so in all Gospel-Duties, the Institution of Christ, as Baptism, the Lords Supper, and the rest, the actions themselves in those things are not simply good; nay, they are accidentally evil, unless they have all the due circumstances attending them; the goodness of those things depends wholly upon Institution, and there the manner, as well as the mater, must be punctually observed. Nay, the manner of doing such things determines the matter of them; for if they be performed in their due manner, the action is good, if not, the Action it self is sinful.

Having thus far endeavoured to establish this Truth, That the exercise of force by the hand of the Civil Power, is no means appointed by Christ, either for settling or regulating the Churches of the New Testament; and is a thing in its own nature altogether unreasonable so to

to be; And that Princes and Magiſtrates under the Goſpel ſhould imploy their care, to ſee the Laws of Chriſts Kingdom put in execution, in the way and manner he himſelf hath appointed, and ought to reſt themſelves ſatisfied therewith, as that which his infinite Wisdom hath provided, and to leave things that are purely Goſpel-offences to Goſpel-puniſhments, as moſt adæquate and proper; knowing well, that if after ſuch puniſhments inflicted, Errors and Hereſies ſhall continue in the Church, Chriſt will over-rule the Being of them, for holy ends and purpoſes, according to that of *Paul*, There muſt be Hereſies, that thoſe that are approved, may be made manifeſt; which though it be no good ground to indulge Hereſie, from any puniſhment Chriſt hath appointed for it; yet 'tis a very good ground to ſatisfie our ſelves upon, after all Chriſts means uſed, and to ſtop us from all violent and irregular proceedings, when we conſider, *That Chriſt will extract good out of ſuch evil, and turn ſuch things to his own Glory, and the good of ſuch as are ſincere.* I ſay, having endeavoured the proof of theſe things, that the plaineſt Truths of the Goſpel ought not to be inforced upon men, much leſs thoſe more doubtful and obſcure, concerning Diſcipline and Order [of the obſcurity of which there needs no other evidence, than the holieſt, wiſeſt, and moſt impartial men have in all Ages differed about them] How may we lament over the preſent Impoſition of the Ceremonies, now enjoyned amongſt us in *England*, which are no part of Divine Truth, nor any of Chriſts Inſtitutions, but things perfectly Humane in their creation, and yet are inforced by the Civil Power upon the practice and Conſciences of men. If Chriſt did not appoint his own Laws to be inforced upon the Church, but to be received and executed by the influence and operating power of the Holy Ghoſt, concurring with them; How little pleaſed will he be to have Laws and Rules made by others, to be ſo inforced? If it be neither reaſonable nor warrantable for a Magiſtrate to inforce the Truths of the Goſpel in his own ſenſe of them, How much leſs is it ſo to enjoyn things in the Worſhip of God, wholly framed by men, and of their deviſing? Thoſe, as being Divine, are in their own nature infallibly and certainly true. Theſe, as being Humane, are lyable to all Error and Miſtake. How unmerciful a thing is it, and how unlike the Primitive Chriſtians, to make ſuch Ceremonies a Rule of the Churches Communion, which uſed to be nothing but the Creed? That a man now only out of Conſcience to God, and without a juſt imputation of either Faction or Folly, or any other deſigned end, may very well become a *Non-Conformiſt* to theſe preſent impoſed Ceremonies, hath been often evinced.

Theſe things may afford us ſome proſpect into thoſe grounds upon which Liberty of Conſcience ought to be aſſerted, and alſo the due and natural bounds of it. When men diſcourſing of this Subject, are enumerating what parties may be tolerated, and what not. What Fundamentals are neceſſary to be believed, to make a man a capable Subject of this Liberty, and how far the puniſhment is to be inflicted upon men for matters of this Nature, are to proceed, and where to be terminated; they do but loſe themſelves, and come to be involved with inextricable inconveniences, and do uſually little more than diſcover their own particular inclinations and intereſts; and at laſt often end in this Determination, *That none are fit to be Indulged, but ſuch as are punctually of their own belief and perſwaſion.* The general Laws of Nature, and the general Laws of the Goſpel, are the beſt Umpire in this Caſe: As the firſt renders it a thing unreaſonable, ſo the other makes it unlawful to tolerate any thing upon any pretence againſt the common Light, and the common Intereſt, and natural good of mankind. And ſo on the other hand, 'tis equally as unreaſonable and as unlawful, to force men about things wholly Supernatural and purely Spiritual; and ſo are all the matters of the Goſpel, which lie ſeated in mens Belief and Perſwaſion, in reference to their own Eternal Condition: and as they have no proper relation to Humane Concerns, ſo they are in *Aliena republica*, and are onely cogniſable there, and onely to be dealt with by ſuch Spiritual means and puniſhments, as Chriſt in the Goſpel hath appointed for that end.

Hear the Opinion of the Learned *Alſted*, on this Subject at large: *De pace Religionis (ut vocant) ſeu de libertate Religionis ſeu de bono Autonomiæ: An & quatenus conceſſi poſſit a pio Magiſtratu.* Concerning liberty of Religion, and how far it may be granted by a pious Magiſtrate, he ſaith, *That though the Magiſtrate*

giſtrate be to defend but one Religion, even that which he judges to be the truth by the Word of God, yet none ought to be compelled to that by outward force, but every mans Conſcience to be left at liberty. Et nonnunquam diverſarum Religionum exercitium, ſi non publicum, ſaltem privatum, aut clandeſtinum ex ſingularibus cauſis permittendum eſſe ſtatuimus; Atque hoc demum ſenſit pacem, & concordiam externam ſeu politiam inter Orthodoxos & non Orthodoxos, ſæpe etiam Hereticos ſimul colendam, ab ipſo pio Magiſtratu procurari, & poſſe & debere exiſtimamus. And he gives theſe three following Reaſons for his Judgment.

Prima nititur generalibus illis Scripturæ dictis, quæ juſticiam, & charitatem, ſtudiumque pacis & concordiæ ſerò nobis omnibus commendant: & nè quid alitèr adverſus proximam ſtatuamus, quàm qualitèr nobiſcum agi vellemus, diſertè præcipiunt. Denique ut conſcientiis ſuam libertatem concedamus, & diſſentientes in negotio Religionis amicè toleremus, omninò mandant, Mat. 5. 7. Rom. 12. 14. *& alibi.*

Secunda petitur ab exemplis ſapientium & piorum Regum, tum in veteri, tum in novo Teſtamento, &c.

Tertia ab ipſa naturali Equitate, itemque adjuncta utilitate, quam etiàm experientia quotidiana fere comprobat. Nam præterquam quod æquiſſimum eſt, in cauſa Religionis ab omni vi & coactione externâ abſtinere ipſis etiàm rebus publicis ut ità fiat, omninò expedit, atque conducit; quippe quæ alioqui facillimè turbarentur, ut inteſtinis bellis, ac mutuis lanienis tandem concideren: prout hactenus in multis Europæ provinciis, Galliâ præſertim & Belgio, accidiſſe novimus. Cum contra in Germania, Helvetia, Polonia, & alibi locorum, in quibus Religionum libertas hactenus indulta fuit, iſtis diſcordiis & lanienis non fuerit locus. Ergo reſpſa per ſe licita, & bona eſt, etiam ſi per accidens abuſus aliquis accedere poſſit. Alſt. de Eccl. Lib. 4. C. 14.

When

What can be ſaid with more truth and ſoberneſs about this matter?

Having thus conſidered thoſe things, which do moſt immediately reflect upon the Magiſtrates duty in allowing a due liberty to each mans Conſcience, I ſhall in another Diſcourſe conſider how far his Intereſt ingages him this way.

FINIS.